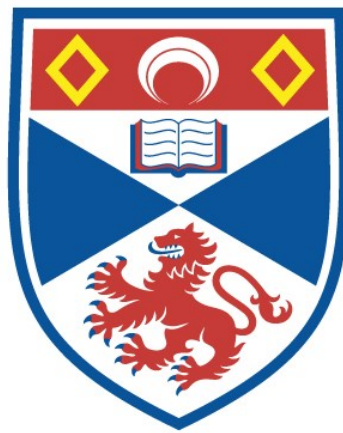


THE IMPACT OF THE MODERNISATION OF IRAN ON KURDISH SOCIETY: MODERNITY, MODERNISATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE (1920-1979)

Marouf Cabi

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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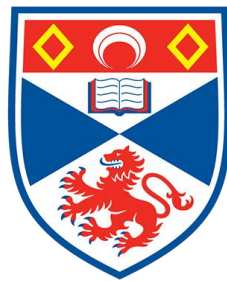
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The Impact of the Modernisation of Iran on Kurdish Society: Modernity, Modernisation and Social Change (1920-1979)

Marouf Cabi



University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
at the University of St Andrews

July 2018

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On behalf of the University of St Andrews, the School of History granted the candidate ethical approval for conducting interviews for this study.

Approval Code: HI12807.

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This thesis is the outcome of an exhilarating intellectual journey, which started in the end of an exceptionally fruitful undergraduate study at Birkbeck College in 2009. The ideas discussed in this manuscript were conceived then and developed later especially during my postgraduate studies (2010-2011) at SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, and then at the University of St Andrews (2014-2015). Many individuals in different capacities and in different ways have shared this journey with me. I thank all of them. I am especially indebted to Professor Ali M. Ansari and Dr Saeed Talajooy, who supervised my PhD project. They were regularly available while their valuable advice helped me to go through this challenging task. I thank these two gentlemen and precious scholars of Iranian studies for all their supports and kindness they showed me. That said, any deficiencies in this paper are mine only and no one else's.

TRANSLATIONS & TRANSLITERATIONS

All quotes from Kurdish and Persian sources are translated by the author unless otherwise stated.

For the transliteration of Kurdish and Persian words, this monograph follows the *Iranian Studies* scheme outlined in the tables below. There are two exceptions. First, for surnames ending in *deh* in Persian, *da* is used when referring to a Kurdish figure, e.g. Sharifz**ada** instead of Sharifz**adeh**, to preserve the Kurdish pronunciation. The second exception is the names of non-English authors of sources published in English. The Persian attributive ezafeh (-e) and Kurdish attributive izafa (-i) are used in the text but not necessarily with a dash in the references. The text uses established anglicised forms such as Kurdistan and Majlis (instead of Kordestan and Majles).

Iranian Studies transliteration scheme

Consonants

z	ض	b	ب
t	ط	p	پ
z	ظ	t	ت
'	ع	s	س
gh	غ	j	ج
f	ف	ch	چ
q	ق	h	ه
k	ک	kh	خ
g	گ	d	د
l	ل	z	ذ
m	م	r	ر
n	ن	z	ز
h	ه	zh	ژ
v	و	s	ص
y	ی	sh	ش
'	ء	s	هـ

Vowels

short	long	diphthongs
a (as in <i>ashk</i>)	a or ā (as in <i>ensan</i> or <i>āb</i>)	-
e (as in <i>fekr</i>)	i (as in <i>melli</i>)	ey (as in <i>Teymur</i>)
o (as in <i>pol</i>)	u (as in <i>Tus</i>)	ow (as in <i>rowshan</i>)

Available at <https://associationforiranianstudies.org/journal/transliteration>, accessed 20/06/2018.

1. Iran and its administrative divisions, 1977.



Source: Jahangir Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile* (1977).

ABSTRACT

This PhD study examines the consequences of modernity and modernisation for Kurdish-Iranian society in the twentieth century. It identifies a dual process of socio-economic transformation and homogenisation of culture and identity, the dialectics of which (re)formed the economic, social, political and cultural structures of modern Kurdish society in Iran. As a result, socio-economically, Kurdish society became integrated in modern Iran, whereas it vigorously resisted homogenisation of identity and culture; at the same time, it maintained porous cultural borders with other societies in Iran, and continued to be shaped by mechanisms of modern cultural encounters. The socio-economic transformation of Iran strengthened and created new bonds between societies in Iran, while at the same time resistance and struggle for political and cultural rights became permanent characteristics of Kurdish-Iranian society. During the modernisation of Iran, the era of the ‘White Revolution’ is distinguished for the profound transformation of Iran it entailed. Therefore, an interpretation of the era constitutes the main concern of this thesis because, building on previous attempts to modernise Iran, the era of the White Revolution was crucial in engendering profound changes in Kurdish society.

The theoretical framework of this study is informed by theories of social change and transformation against modernisation theories, and by theories of nation and nationalism which theoretically enable this research to distance itself from national narratives. Significantly, this framework includes a range of cultural critiques, benefits from studies of homogenisation and state formation, and relies on rich scholarly works on the formation of modern Iran, which, when combined, accentuate the cultural, political and social dimensions of modern nation-building in Iran. The result is a multi-dimensional approach to social change in Kurdish society. It is the dynamics of the dual process which continue to (re)form the foundations of Kurdish society in Iran; and it is this approach which I regard as a crucial contribution to both Kurdish and Iranian studies.

INTRODUCTION

Modernity unleashed modernisation and nation-building in Asian societies in an age when, as scholars have noted, Europe's cultural superiority had followed its military and technological supremacy over such societies since the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ In twentieth-century multicultural Iran, where the Kurds had historically constituted a crucial component of the ethnic structure, this consisted of a dual process of socio-economic transformation and homogenisation of culture and identity, with their own consequences. In this process, Kurdish society became socio-economically more integrated into modern Iran, while it simultaneously resisted the state's political modernisation, as a result of which modern *Kurdayeti* (Kurdishness), as both a national understanding of self and a movement for political and cultural rights, took form, based of course (to borrow from Marx) on conditions inherited from the past. This study discovers that modern Kurdish society in Iran is in fact a synthesis of this dual process, which has continued to be reconfigured according to the different historical and social contexts throughout the twentieth century.

There are several important historical conjunctures within the dual process. However, the era of the 'White Revolution' (1963-1979) distinguishes itself as an epoch during which modernisation intensified, resulting in a profound transformation of Iranian societies' economic, social, political and cultural structures by the end of the 1970s. Although this era was the culmination of the preceding modernising efforts, its impact on Kurdish society was revolutionary. Therefore, one can argue that in many ways Kurdish

¹ See Nikki R. Keddie, "The French Revolution and the Middle East," in Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Iran and the Muslim World: Resistance and Revolution* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995).

society of the end of the 1970s was the result of the era of the White Revolution. From this perspective, which fundamentally contrasts the prevalent homogenous approach in the scholarship to the concepts of 'Kurds' and 'Kurdistan', this study follows its analysis of the consequences of modernity for Iran's Kurdish society in two parts, which cover significant aspects of the dual process of socio-economic and political modernisation.

In *Part 1, Chapter 1* presents a background to the social and political integration of Kurdish society, by drawing a link with pre-modern times. The transformation of power relations, modernisation and centralisation in the Ottoman and Qajar Empires, modernity, and, finally, the emergence of modern nation-states, took place in a process which transformed the identity of the Kurds from a historical-cultural people, into an 'ethnic minority'. In Iran, this process was inextricably linked with the process of the formation of a national Iranian identity, a process in which the modern state, to borrow from a study on states' moral inclusion and exclusion, 'sought the monopoly over the right to define political identity' in addition to its other functions.² Finally, this chapter argues that the state-led modernisation demonstrated a tendency to strengthen the social, economic and cultural bonds between various societies in Iran. This is a point, overlooked by Iranian and Kurdish national narratives, is in fact crucial because, for example, the subsequent political and ethnic demands of the Kurds in Iran, in which autonomy *within* the framework of Iran stands above all, can mainly be explained in the light of that fact.

Chapter 2 deals with the paradox of modernity which is exposed in the preceding chapter. How can the political and ethnic resistance of the Kurds be explained, if modernisation created or strengthened the tendency to integrate? This chapter argues that the answers to this question lie within the dual process. Homogenisation (re)produced

² Andrew Linklater, "The Problem of Community in International Relations," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 15, No. 2 (Spring 1990), 149.

modern *Kurdayeti* because decentralisation became inimical to the modern state. However, the policies of the state in the process of nation-building did not merely derive from the nationalisation of identity around a core ethno-cultural community, i.e. the Persian community, or from blind animosity towards non-Persians; this study highlights the exigencies of the modern state too. A case in point is language reform, alongside attempts to create new vocabularies needed for the running of a modern state. Furthermore, this approach enables us to engage with other crucial themes, such as linguistic simplification and purification.

Chapters in *Part 2* follow the dual process and focus on the era of the White Revolution. *Chapter 3* presents a background to the ideas incorporated in the principles of the White Revolution, ideas which had been formed and pursued by various forces in Iran since the early decades of the twentieth century. It also presents a brief overview of development plans, to demonstrate that while they grew in sophistication and benefited from enormous financial resources, they became increasingly centralised, and were devoid of economic plans for the provincial regions. *Chapter 4* discusses the social consequences of the modernisation in Kurdistan. Unplanned economic expansion and urbanisation, and exodus to cities because of the White Revolution's land reform and economic transformation, had different consequences for different layers of society. Modernisation raised standards of living for many, whereas new impoverished city neighbourhoods began to expand around Kurdish urban centres; it introduced and expanded education and healthcare provision, while in many ways it strengthened the disparity between urban and rural areas, city and village. Many became better-off, enjoying increased income and forms of cultural capital. At the same time with no labour law in place, modernisation created a modern Kurdish working class consisting of armies

of urban unskilled labourers and seasonal workers, and forced poor rural families to migrate and work in terrible working conditions surrounded by unfamiliar circumstances, expanding child labour. Therefore, this chapter sheds light on a crucial dimension of Iran's rapid socio-economic change, completely overlooked in the existing scholarship.

Chapter 5 analyses the political and cultural consequences of modernisation by examining the way that the political and cultural structures of Kurdish society responded to homogenisation. Political suppression of the Kurds and their resistance constituted two prominent characteristics of Kurdistan which continued during the White Revolution. Modern education, urbanisation and intellectual transformations were among factors which yielded networks of cultural and political activists, and formed the nuclei of modern political parties. Interestingly, although the idea of armed struggle remained attractive because of its worldwide popularity in the time, and as a response to militarisation and dictatorship, the political and cultural activism of the 1970s distinguished itself by distancing from theories of armed struggle, instead committing to theories of popular social revolution. Culturally, the argument of this chapter develops around two significant consequences of the modernisation for Iran, being, its cultural 'westernisation' and, in Gramscian terms, the establishment of Persian cultural hegemony.³ 'Westernisation' here refers to the state's imposition and inculcation of the preferred aspects of what was deemed as the 'Western' way of life because of its origin. In these circumstances, a democratic and progressive perception of modernity inspired a generation to engage actively in social change, adopt cultural innovations, and enhance

³ Hegemony, in Gramscian terms, is maintaining authority through consent rather than coercion. An intellectual hegemony is achieved when a set of ideas becomes a point of departure, making a conception 'instinct', 'spontaneously' conceived, as 'common sense'. See Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 198-99.

their societies' cultural achievements. Simultaneously, based on the theory of *Gharbzadegi* or 'Westoxication', nativism became a formidable force in Iranian politics. In Kurdistan, however, the new educated generation mainly inclined towards socialist critiques of modernisation and distanced itself from calls to return to cultural purity, an idea increasingly cultivated by cultural critiques based on Islamic traditions and a Heideggerian critique of Western modernity.⁴ Cultural, especially religious, distinctions, functioned as effective barriers to imparting political Islam to Kurdistan, although evidence points to a nascent religious *Kurdayeti*, constituting the origins of a Kurdish nativism. As regards Persian cultural hegemony, the era was marked by the establishment of the hegemony of the Persian language and culture in Iran. The emergence and proliferation of the new *visual* means of communication, e.g. television and cinema, in addition to the existing audio means of communication, were crucial cultural developments for both the westernisation of culture and the establishment of Persian cultural hegemony. In brief, Kurdish society was culturally a synthesis of such developments, including the resistance to homogenisation. Lastly, this chapter's arguments engage the scholarship for the first time on the theme of modernisation's cultural consequences and, as crucially, also draw scholarly attention to the impact of the new means of communication in modern culture regarding, in this case, Iranian Kurdish society.

Finally, *Chapter 6* investigates the modernisation of gender relations in Kurdistan as another consequence of the modernisation of Iran. Guided by gender theories⁵ and

⁴ For more on Heidegger and his influence on important thinkers such as Ahmad Fardid, Ali Shari'ati and Jalal Al-e Ahmad, see Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85-128.

⁵ See Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Gender," in Garthine Walker (ed.), *Writing Early Modern History* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005); Dorothy Ko, "Gender," in

theories of change and transformation (see below), this chapter adds yet another important dimension to studies of the formation of modern Kurdish society in Iran in the twentieth century. It deliberately stresses *modernisation of gender order* against the notion of *emancipation of women* to maintain a critical approach towards development theories which perceive women as a category for ‘secularisation’, regarded as a prerequisite to become ‘modern’. Similarly, this chapter’s examination of the transformation of the social status of women, aims to emancipate women from the Kurdish national narrative, which promotes the notion of woman as a *national* asset, whose appearance and social place or action need to correspond to the need of the perceived nation. This chapter briefly highlights how the idea of a ‘new woman’ was part of modernity’s ideological package, and therefore intimately accompanied the idea of ‘nation’. This is followed by identifying major factors, including women’s agency, which affected the social status of women in Kurdish society. Furthermore, this chapter links social change in Kurdish society to social change across Iran, which partly forms a critical reading of, and a different approach to, national narratives which nationalise and categorise women as ‘Kurdish’ or ‘Persian’. At the same time, this chapter transcends the limited boundaries of a popular Marxist approach which regards ‘the woman question’ as part of the class struggle and, therefore, secondary to the struggle of the working class. Lastly, it needs to be emphasised that, insofar as gender order is concerned, the era of the White Revolution is a crucial period for investment in modern education of women and healthcare, and for legal reforms.

Ulnika Rublack (ed.), *A Concise Companion to History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Stefan Dudink et al. (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the Kurds contains many authoritative works, which have contributed to the foundation and consolidation of an intellectual tradition in Kurdish studies. However, the scholarship tends to focus on later works. For example, a recent annotated bibliography states that William Eagleton, Archie Roosevelt and Abdulrahman Ghassemlou are ‘perhaps the best authorities on the Kurds in Iran’.⁶ The first two have written on the Kurdish Republic of 1946. Ghassemlou completed his doctorate thesis, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, in the 1960s which (though not identified by the bibliography) is an historical and geographical description of the Kurds in the context of the Cold War which warns, in relation to the notion of the independence of Kurdistan, that ‘as long as Imperialism remains master of the Middle East, the Communists in Kurdistan have to lay main stress on the link between the nations of these countries and propagandize against separation’.⁷ ‘Supplements to these works’, the annotated bibliography asserts, ‘can be found in [David] McDowall [...] and Rouhollah K. Ramazani’.⁸ The latter’s work concerns the autonomous Republics of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan during the Second World War, whereas the former has become more than a supplementary work and is generally regarded as an authoritative modern history of the Kurds. Despite the book’s important contribution to Kurdish histories, David McDowall’s *A Modern History of the Kurds* presents a useful but limited section on the Kurds in the revolutionary Iran.⁹ In addition to this, Van Bruinessen’s *Agha, Sheikh and State* (1978) is another extremely popular historical and anthropological study of the Kurds.¹⁰ However, since its

⁶ Lokman I. Meho and Kelly L. Maglaughlin, *Kurdish Culture and Society: An Annotated Bibliograph* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 16.

⁷ Abdulrahman Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (Czechoslovakia: Academy of Sciences, 1965), 255.

⁸ Meho and Maglaughlin, *Kurdish Culture and Society*, 16-17.

⁹ David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996), 261-83.

¹⁰ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political History of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992).

publication, the field of cultural studies along with, for instance, post-colonial theories, have greatly expanded, making a critical reading of such valuable studies a continuous task.

The pioneering group includes the works of European and Russian scholars and diplomats. Recognised as ‘the “fathers” of modern Kurdology’,¹¹ Vladimir Minorsky, Basili Nikitin and Pierre Rondot contributed to the foundation and consolidation of an intellectual tradition on the Kurds. Apart from ‘frequent obeisance’ to such figures, there are other authoritative works such as Thomas Bois’s *The Kurds* (1965) in French, which has been available in Arabic since 1973, and his contribution to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam (IE)*.¹² Bois enumerates many travel accounts and anthropological works since the early nineteenth century. Indeed, without such contributions by Europeans, the entries on Kurds in *IE* cannot be imagined. Inspired by political contexts, both categories were largely political accounts, the methodological and theoretical foundations of which have not been sufficiently challenged widely enough. The exception is recent academic works in modern Kurdish and Iranian studies. However, while Kurdish studies have mainly been preoccupied with the origins of Kurdish nationalism,¹³ Iranian studies’ incomparable and rich studies of Iran are yet to extend to Kurdish society.

Until very recently, studies on the modernisation of Iran had not been extended into analysing social change in Kurdistan. In the last two decades, however, a number of valuable studies on Iranian Kurdistan have appeared. These studies are attributed to a group of Iranian scholars in Iran, mainly but not exclusively Kurdish, who have begun to

¹¹ Meho and Maglaughlin, *Kurdish Culture and Society*, 52.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cf. Abbas Vali (ed.), *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003).

challenge the exclusive domination of political and elite Kurdish historiographies.¹⁴ Works produced by this group pay attention to academic advances especially in the social sciences to avoid the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, which nevertheless continues to shape the popular perception of modernisation in Iran. However, this tendency is rather *implicitly* illustrated in relevant articles which assess the impact of the modernisation of Iran on many regions and cities in Kurdistan.¹⁵ For example, analysing the transformation of family amongst the Gaverk and Mangor peoples around Mahabad, one study identifies a ‘gradual transition’ from traditional ways of life to modern family structures.¹⁶ However, based on interviews, the study manages to reflect how there were people who lamented the loss of some aspects of the ‘traditional’ way of life, while others praised the emergence of the new family structure. Another study on the Hawraman region, generally regarded as geographically impregnable, records improvements in the provision of health and education, more effective means of communication and transportation as positive ramifications of the interaction of the elements of *nowsazi* or modernisation.¹⁷

These scholars’ tendency to transcend the duality of traditional and modern, conduct serious and responsible research, and base their research on various theories in the social sciences and anthropology, are among many promising aspects of this new

¹⁴ Cf. Ahmad Mohammadpur and Taqi Iman, "Taqhirate Ejtemai Dar Sardasht," [Social Chang in Sardasht], *Nameye Ensanshenasi* 1, No. 5 (1383 [2004]); Mehdi Rezayi et al., "Sonnat, Nosazi Wa Khanewade," [Tradition, Modernisation and Family], *Pazhohe-she Zanan*, No. 4 (2010); Omid Qaderzade et al., "Tejarate Marzi Wa Tafsire Mardom Az Taghirate Jahane Ziste Khanevade," [Border Trade and People's Perception of Family], *Rahbord Farhang* 1, No. 22 (Summer 1392 [2013]).

¹⁵ The administrative division of Iran allocates Kurdish cities to the Kurdistan, Western Azerbaijan and Kermanshah provinces.

¹⁶ A. Mohammadpur et al., "The Meaning Reconstruction of Family Changes Using Grounded Theory: (a Case Study of Mangor and Gaverk Tribes)," [Persian], *Journal of Family Research* 5, No. 3 (2009); Ahmad Mohammadpur, "Disembedding the Traditional Family: Grounded Theory and the Study of Family Change among Mangor and Gaverk Tribes of Iranian Kurdistan," *Comparative Family Studies* 44, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 2013).

¹⁷ Mehdi Rezayi and Ahmad Mohammadpur, "Darke Manaiye Payamadhaye Woroode Nowsazi Be Mantagheye Oramanate Kordestane Iran," [The Consequences of Modernisation for the Oraman Region], *Majaleye Jame'eshenasie Iran* 9, No. 1-2 (Tabestan 1387 [2008]), 3-33.

trend in studies of social change in Iranian Kurdistan. However, a tendency to transcend the rigid dichotomy of traditional and modern, must lead to a critical analysis of the components of this dichotomy. The concepts of traditional and modern, employed in these studies remain undefined, with the effect that they seem to be used as self-evident concepts. They follow a Weberian notion of ‘primordial Eastern societies’ versus modern Western societies, which became very influential especially after the Second World War.¹⁸ These studies do not provide any critical examination of modernisation theories in general, nor the dichotomy in particular. Lastly, the above theoretical deficiency continues to restrict the scope of current social change studies.

‘State-of-the-Art’ of Kurdish Studies

The following points on the state of current Kurdish literature reveal the decisive contribution of this study. First, the conspicuous absence of social change studies exposes the limits of the existing scholarship. As an umbrella founded on theories of social change and transformation, such studies have infinite potential to cover a wide range of subjects dealing with, for example, social history, and cultural, gender and labour studies which are not at least adequately represented in the scholarship. The topic of social change studies has been discussed in other parts of this study when reviewing a number of recent works in that direction by the scholars of Kurdish studies in academic centres in Iran.

This takes us to the second point on historiography. As an intellectual authority, Kurdish historiography has not relieved itself from a predominant national historiography, the foundations of which were laid in the early decades of the twentieth century. Modern Kurdish national historiography emerged to safeguard the historical and

¹⁸ Zachary Lockman, *The Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd ed. (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86-89.

cultural existence of the Kurds in the face of the modern states' homogenisation of identity.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the historiography fed off modern European racial and national theories which had gained cultural hegemony as 'scientific' knowledge, following Europe's technological and military ascendancy. Enshrining the existing myths, it turned them into facts to authenticate its nation's historical existence; this was a common enterprise of all modern 'nations'.

The final point pertains to an intellectual tradition with strong connections to power which continues to enjoy an intellectual authority in Kurdish studies. This tradition goes back to the West in the nineteenth century, during which the secondary literature on 'Kurds' began to grow as the result of a considerable rise in interests in both overseas and adjacent cultures and societies. The nineteenth century, in Cecil John Edmonds' words, was 'the Golden Age of exploration in the Middle East, and most of the giants of those days were Englishmen'.²⁰ Indeed, for Europeans the age of exploration was an age of competition to be the first to reach the remotest and most 'unknown' places.²¹ Edmonds enumerates thirteen travel accounts regarding Kurds and Kurdistan by such Europeans from 1819 until 1913, a 'never-ending source of delight' which thrilled the likes of Edmonds to follow in their tracks and add to such accounts on the Kurds.²² In addition to this, Thomas Bois cites many more travel accounts or memoirs as well as anthropological sources, which were published by the end of the century.²³ The contributions of the

¹⁹ Cf. Hussain Huzni, "Ghonchai Baharistan: Tarikhi Kurdan," [Blossoms of Spring: The History of the Kurds] in Badran Ahmad Habib (ed.), *Sarjam Barhami H. Huzni [Collected Work]* (Aras: Hawler, 2011), 53-104; Muhammad Mardukh, *Mezhui Kurd Wa Kurdistan* [The History of Kurd and Kurdistan] (Hawler: Rozhhalat Press, 2011).

²⁰ C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²² *Ibid.*, 21-28.

²³ Thomas Bois, "The Geography of Kurdistan," in C. E. Bosworth, et al. (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1986), 447.

English travellers and the British Empire notwithstanding, Russian and French orientalist and anthropologists too played a significant role in expanding studies on the Kurds. Combined, nineteenth century exploration laid the foundation of an intellectual tradition which significantly contributed to fashioning a modern, homogenous Kurdish identity through studying Kurds and their lands from a new perspective.²⁴ Crucially, the exploration was ideologically stimulated by modern orientalism and 'scientific' ethnography (later anthropology), which, as social and political disciplines, were rooted in the intellectual advancements of the Enlightenment and Romanticism.²⁵ However, the publication of their findings primarily satisfied specific 'scientific' curiosity and political enquiry, rather than serving the Kurds themselves.

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by the emergence of the language of science, generated by the works of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, which replaced the previous explanation of history by divine guidance and intervention. This intellectual process, from which many authoritative figures emerged, constituted the basis on which further studies on the Kurds in the next century advanced. Furthermore, inspired by political developments throughout the twentieth century, this intellectual tradition vigorously persisted. Names such as Minorsky, Bois, Driver and Nikitin became popular as their published works on the Kurds embellished encyclopaedias or became authoritative accounts, satiating ethnographic curiosities.²⁶ Nikitin's *Kurd and Kurdistan* (1955), translated into Persian and praised by the renowned

²⁴ Cf. bibliographies used by Thomas Bois and Vladimir Minorsky in *ibid.*, 438-64.

²⁵ For a history of anthropology, cf. Johannes Fabian, *Time and Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*, 4th ed. (US: Pearson Education, 1966); and for a history of modern orientalism, cf. Lockman, *Contending Vision*.

²⁶ Cf. Vladimir Minorsky, "Origins and Pre-Islamic History," in C. E. Bosworth, et al. (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1986).

Kurdish translator, Muhammad Qazi, has remained a reference book for the Kurds in Iran.²⁷ Coming into the twenty-first century, this intellectual tradition in Kurdish studies continues its affinity with a homogenous, culturally descriptive and orientalist approach to Kurds and Kurdistan. Finally, the deterioration in academic standards of rigorous research, systematic investigation and innovation in Kurdish studies over the last two decades, indicates the persistence and authority of that intellectual tradition.

This academic shortcoming becomes more evident when we note that the intellectual tradition of the twentieth century and its current persistence are bridged by a number of serious academic works which were published towards the end of the last century and which, despite their deficiencies, continued to represent rigorous research and scholarship.²⁸ In fact, this was the time when a more heterogeneous, critical trend began to challenge the dominant intellectual tradition that had represented the Kurds as a monolithic entity, thus forming a new intellectual trend in Kurdish studies characterised by increased relevance and accuracy. One prominent example is Amir Hassanpour's *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan* (1992), which has rightly become a classic. Hassanpour's book belongs to a trend which has countervailed the intellectual tradition, and is distinguished by both its heterogeneous, critical approach, and its academic standards. Furthermore, there have also been valuable works on Kurdish nationalism and literature with theoretical and methodological contributions.²⁹

²⁷ Vasili Nikitin, *Kord Wa Kordestan* [Kurd and Kurdistan], trans. M. Qazi (Iran: Nilufar, 1363 [1984-5]).

²⁸ Cf. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*. This excludes McDowall's Chapter 13, entitled "Subjects of Shia in Iran", which is a limited account of the events in Iranian Kurdistan during the 1979 Revolution.

²⁹ Cf. Vali, *Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*; Farangis Qaderi, "The Emergence of Modern Kurdish Poetry," PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2015.; Hakan Ozoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (USA: State University of New York Press, 2004); Abbas Vali, *Kurds and the State in Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Jaffer Sheyholislami, "Language Varieties of the Kurds," in Wolfgang Taucher (ed.), *The Kurds: History - Religion - Language - Politics* (Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2015); and academic journals *Kurdish Studies* and *Derwaze*.

Nevertheless, the homogenous approach of the intellectual tradition has persisted, with undesirable outcomes. The main reason for this is that whereas the increase in the international awareness on the Kurds and their political and social predicaments have stimulated studies on the Kurds, the academic credentials of the old intellectual tradition not only are left unchallenged but, probably unwittingly in most cases, reinforced. Handbooks, which are presented as academic studies but give the impression of expert analyses, completely ignore the impact of social change and transformation in the nation-states, especially in Iran, since the middle of the twentieth century.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The theoretical framework of this study consists of theories of change and transformation, which go against modernisation theories, to serve a multi-dimensional approach to social change in Kurdish society; and of theories of nation and nationalism, to maintain a critical approach to Kurdish and Iranian national narratives. These are explained in the following sections which also provide the definitions of many concepts used in this research. Furthermore, this framework is informed by a number of cultural critiques which enable us to understand both the cultural dimension of state formation and cultural consequences of modernisation. Discussed mainly in Chapter 5, Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony is vital to understand the process of modern cultural encounters in multicultural Iran. Likewise, Raymond Williams' notion of 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures, a notion based on Gramsci, is employed to explain the ongoing tension between a hegemonic, powerful culture and marginalised cultures, and elucidate the process in which the hegemonic culture concedes ground to others or other cultures achieve better cultural positions. This is complemented by Pierre Bourdieu's definition of culture as a symbolic system and his concept of cultural capital. As a symbolic system, culture relies

on social conditions and relations of power to produce and perpetuate meanings which safeguard the interest of the dominant social group or class. For socio-economic and political as well as cultural reasons, the era of the White Revolution profoundly affected social conditions and relations of power (see Chapter 5). The establishment of the hegemony of Persian language and culture is one crucial consequence of the way such conditions changed. Insofar as the concept of cultural capital is concerned, it is one form of capital, and refers to culture as an economic practice. According to Bourdieu, economic theory has reduced 'the universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange, which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximization of profit, i.e., (economically) self-interested', and 'has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as non-economic, and therefore, disinterested'.³⁰ Cultural capital includes products and practices which are not 'directly or immediately convertible into money',³¹ but accumulate in different forms in relation to the way society is formed; therefore, restricting or expanding the access of different social groups to cultural capital becomes a means to achieve higher social positions. From this perspective, this study benefits from the concept of cultural capital for two reasons. First, it sheds light on regional and social disparities which either were not at least adequately addressed by economic plans in the 1960s and the 1970s or increased because of the plans' orientations. Secondly, its inclusion in this study aims to raise awareness of this concept in Kurdish social change studies.

At the same time, this study is indebted to John Thompson's analysis of the role of the new visual means of communication in modern society, because it makes possible

³⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (London: Greenwood Press, 1986), 242.

³¹ Ibid.

an adequate interpretation of the way the cultural hegemony of Persian in multicultural Iran was established. Lastly, Edward Said's critique of orientalism as a discourse, which in Foucauldian terms denotes notions and systematic statements to explain the world and is a manifestation of the link between knowledge and power, contributes to this study's historical perspective.³² As regards the Kurds, orientalism as a discourse has on the one hand continued to reproduce a monolithic perception of the Kurds, for example, as tribal, rural, and masculine with their own connotations which contrast with the idea of the 'modern'. On the other, highlighting elitist, national or political historiographies, orientalism has undermined social histories of various Kurdish societies. Such misrepresentations of the Kurds have served discourses of power to undermine the political and cultural rights of the Kurds in Iran, and continue to shape ideological battlegrounds between opposing national narratives (see below).

The intimate relation between modernisation and nation-building exposes itself when we note that modernisation theories were formulated based on a Western model for non-Western countries where nation-building was in full swing. This said, studies of Kurdish identity in the process of change and transformation can yield a theoretical contribution to theories of nation and nationalism. Comparative studies of the Copts and the modernisation of Egypt, and of Catalan nationalism, only accentuate the peculiarity of Kurdish identity. Unlike the Copts, Kurds cannot be treated as a religious community; and Kurdish nationalism is different from Catalan nationalism which emerged with industrial foundations during the formation of modern Spain since the nineteenth century.³³

³² Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1972), 24-25 and Ch. 2; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978), 3.

³³ On the Copts, see Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011); and for information on Catalan nationalism, see Stanley Payne,

This section's review of modernisation theories and the debates on their origins aims to create a firm theoretical foundation for (Kurdish) social change studies in Iran. The following discussions derive on a number of selected works on the subject, both old and recent. This includes Zachary Lockman's recent study, which brings Max Weber to our attention for the role of Weber's ideas in popularising the duality of tradition and modernity. Obviously, Weber's sociology is not confined to this and constitutes a very rich authoritative, intellectual source for the scholarship;³⁴ nevertheless, as I have noted based on recent scholarly works on social change in Iranian Kurdish society, it is this authority which has shaped popular and scholarly perceptions of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in Iran. At the same time, this section intends to contribute to these discussions by adding another dimension to the debate on modernisation in regard to Iran, where modernisation and development theories played a crucial role in shaping the state's centralising, urban-oriented economic plans.

In this study, 'modernisation' does not denote a single process of transition from a 'traditional' society to a 'modern' one. 'Traditional' and 'modern' are not self-evident concepts, nor are they, as Reinhard Bendix explains, mutually exclusive. As John Stevenson argues in his study of social change in interwar Britain, 'all ages are ages of transition' and some of the most significant features of social change have their origins in the earlier period.³⁵ Therefore, Stevenson concludes, any understanding of an era involves recognising that 'it was an end as much as a beginning, in which the concerns of the past have as important a part to play as those which foreshadow an emerging

"Catalan and Basque Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, No. 1, Nationalism and Separatism (1971).

³⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (California: University of California Press, 1978).

³⁵ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945* (Great Britain: Penguin, 1984), 17.

society'.³⁶ Furthermore, this study follows this discussion by maintaining a critical view of modernisation theories, which were advanced and formulated in the post-World War Two era as the result of a series of international and political developments;³⁷ the theories followed development discourse formed in this era.³⁸

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term modernisation connoted social change. It consisted of 'the economic or political advance of some pioneering society and subsequent changes in follower societies'.³⁹ Social change resulted in modern sociology pioneered by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, which, as Bendix explains, 'developed almost wholly around the themes and antitheses cast up' by social change. However, an oversimplified view of tradition versus modernity developed too. This 'oversimplification resulted from ideological interpretation of the contrast between tradition and modernity, and from undue generalizations of the European experience'.⁴⁰ This generalisation entailed a paradigmatic view of modernity as the new civilisation of Europe and North America that has developed ever since. Modernity as a new civilisation implies its uniqueness in human history, and is based on a positive self-image that 'modern Western culture has most often given to itself'.⁴¹ Modernity is generally perceived as 'a coherent system, a package deal, with a well-defined set of attributes'.⁴² However, modernisation in the post-World War Two era began increasingly to connote

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ For critiques of modernisation, tradition and modernity, and modernisation theories cf. Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modern Reconsidered," in Reinhard Bendix (ed.), *Embattled Reason* (New Jersey: Transaction, Inc., 1988); Ilan Pappé, *The Modern Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1-13; Lockman, *The Contending Visions of the Middle East*, 134-48.

³⁸ Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Bendix Reinhard, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9, No. 3 (April 1967), 331.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 293.

⁴¹ Lawrence Cahoon (ed.), *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology* (Australia: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003), 9.

⁴² Lockman, *The Contending Visions of the Middle East*, 137-8.

state-led programmes to modernise non-Western countries based on modernising paradigms propagated by modernisation theories. From this perspective, a profound socio-economic change that came to characterise Iran and its Kurdish society by 1979, cannot be merely explained in terms of such programmes, nor by a number of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ ramifications.

Modernisation Theories

Modernisation theories promulgated ‘a new and intellectually powerful way of thinking about social, political and cultural change’, by which American social scientists tried to understand and predict social and political changes in the Middle East as well as in Asia, Africa and Latin America.⁴³ This paradigm, was ‘rooted in a common set of assumptions about the character and trajectory of historical change’.⁴⁴ Intellectually, these theories were rooted in an intellectual tradition which imposed a sharp distinction between the West and the rest of the world. The older dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism was replaced, in the works of Hamilton Gibbs and Bernard Lewis, by that between tradition and modernity, which stemmed from Max Weber’s sociology.⁴⁵ According to Weber, the traditional societies of ‘the East’ must follow the linear path of civilisation, which Western societies had successfully passed through, in order to be able to earn modern characteristics and end backwardness.⁴⁶

Academically, modernisation theories were the consequence of the political developments since the Second World War which were characterised by independence

⁴³ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 134-41.

movements, the emergence of new, post-colonial countries, and crucially, the emergence of the United States as a new world power. Modernisation became a fashionable term following the War, when comparative social studies in the United States increased and produced a number of modernisation theories.⁴⁷ These theories were founded on the theories of social evolutions, which as Bendix explains guided domestic studies in the United States, unlike in Europe where the theories of social evolution had been ‘employed to interpret the encounter between the advanced industrial societies of the West and the peoples and cultures of colonial and dependent areas in Africa and the Orient’.⁴⁸ In the context of the Cold War, theories of political development were presented as alternative to a dominant Marxism, which explained social and political predicaments by economic inequality, and advocated land reform, state-led economic development, etc., which were later picked up by pro-Western governments and implemented for political reasons.⁴⁹ Preparing a prescription for the modernisation of traditional monarchies, Samuel Huntington has nonetheless rightly noted that while the aim of the modernising monarchs of the nineteenth century was ‘to thwart Imperialism’, the aim of those in the twentieth century was to ‘thwart revolution’.⁵⁰ In the case of Iran, as scholars have noted, the White Revolution was initially a reaction to regional revolutions and coups, in order to preserve the Pahlavi regime and to prevent revolution from below.⁵¹ This study derives from academic works, for example, on the ideological construction of the White Revolution

⁴⁷ Ibid., 280.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ On political developments, cf. W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁵⁰ Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 155.

⁵¹ TNA, FO371 157605 EP 1015/123 24 May 1961, quoted in Ali M. Ansari, "The Myth of the White Revolution," in Ali M. Ansari (ed.), *Politics of Modern Iran* (London: Routledge, 2001), 262.

and the interpretation of modernisation that followed as an uneven development.⁵² However, this study contributes to this interpretation of the White Revolution as a revolution from above, by underlining the way the idea of ‘White Revolution’ was exploited by the state, which adopted and then systematically implemented the existing reformist ideas in such regional and internal contexts, and analysing its consequences for Kurdish society in Iran.

With the intensification of state-led modernisations over the following decades in countries such as Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and other Arab countries, modernisation increasingly came to be perceived as a transition to a Euro-centric modernity, creating, as Bendix notes, certain prerequisites, since it was thought that ‘regardless of time and place all countries must somehow create all the conditions characteristic of modernity before they can hope to be successful in their drive for modernization’.⁵³ However, Bendix maintains, to distinguish ‘before and after’, is ‘an analytical tool, not a tool to predict “developing” countries’.⁵⁴ Concerning concepts of modernity, tradition and modernisation, as far as modernisation theories are concerned, Kurdish social change studies need to employ a critical view and distance itself from a transitional understanding of social change. This includes ‘transitional modernisation’ which, according to Daniel Lerner’s *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), one of the most influential books in theories of modernisation, is a ‘passage’ from an undesirable, backward situation to a more advanced, modern one. The passage is characterised by invidious dualities such as ‘village *versus* town, land *versus* cash, illiteracy *versus* enlightenment, resignation *versus*

⁵² Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Ch. 9.

⁵³ Reinhard, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered", 315-16.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 316.

ambition, [and] piety *versus* excitement'.⁵⁵ Transformation from one to the other, therefore, constitutes the passage from a traditional society.

In brief, this study does not regard 'modernisation' as the transition to becoming 'modern'. Rapid social change has been popularly conceived as an inevitable result of a 'transitional phase'. Reflected in social change studies, this view is reinforced by ongoing intellectual debates which reinforce a transitional perception of modernisation, leading to an oversimplifying single-dimensional approach to social change. By contrast, this study argues for a multi-dimensional approach which invites us to adopt a critical reading of concepts and subjects involved. Moreover, this study's critique of the modernisation of Iran does not intend to unduly demonise the state or the reigning Shah, nor intends to equal the state with the Shah. The state was crucial for the institutional transformation of Iran. However, the White Revolution's modernisation was violently terminated because of the monarch's mismanagement of the process, and dictatorship.

The White Revolution

As mentioned above, this study is concerned with social change in the era of the White Revolution, which began with Muhammad Reza Shah's official proclamation of the principles of his 'White Revolution' in 1963, and ends with the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Therefore, this study makes a distinction between the motives and intentions of the monarch and the way Iran was transformed as a result of the interactions of various factors, including the state. There is a considerable number of scholarly works on many aspects of the White Revolution which also provide background information, while Muhammad Reza Shah's *Great Civilization* reveals his intentions and desires sufficiently.

⁵⁵ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of the Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (USA: Free Press, 1958), 44.

Nevertheless, a study of social change in Kurdish society aims to add new dimensions to the studies of such a significant era in Iran.

NATION AND NATIONALISM

Homogenisation and modern nation-building

In an Iranian context, homogenisation refers to a number of strategies employed by state-builders, including intellectuals who provided the moral justification, to construct a unified Iranian political community based on the pillars of ‘national unity’ and ‘territorial integrity’. As a violent process, homogenisation has included the coercive practices of banning Kurdish, the forced settlement of tribes, and the overt suppression of revolts or any practices of self-rule, e.g. the Mahabad Republic and the uprisings and political movements throughout the Pahlavi era; in short, it has been tantamount to *stami milli* or national oppression, as popularly referred to by Iranian Kurds. However, as the modernisation of Iran intensified during post-WWII era, the cultural hegemony of the perceived core ethnocultural group, i.e. the consensual acceptance of the cultural superiority of Persian culture and language, was established through the expansion of modern (Persian) education and, significantly, the mediasation of culture (see Chapter 5).

Benefiting from studies of state formation⁵⁶ and of the politicisation of ethnicity in the age of modern nation-states,⁵⁷ we can assert that the Kurds in Iran have faced different strategies of homogenisation, while at the same time they present an interesting case which may affect perspectives on nation and nationalism. For this reason, this study highlights a dual process which interestingly includes socio-economic and, to some

⁵⁶ See Heather Rae, *State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-54.

⁵⁷ See Andreas Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapters 3 and 6.

extent, cultural ‘integration’, and resistance to various forms of homogenisation. Generally speaking, the process of state formation in Iran is not merely characterised by systematic inclusion through, for instance, education or administrative divisions or forced inclusion, but also by attempts to create a normative state whose legitimacy is guaranteed by reproducing the cultural hegemony of Persian (see Chapter 5). Therefore, as Heather Rae rightly argues, ‘state formation has a crucial cultural dimension’⁵⁸ which needs to be analysed in studies of homogenisation and modern nation-building too; and this study provides a new perspective in this regard.

Similarly, the Kurdish experience presents a challenge for theories of nation and nationalism, demanding the scholarship to pay attention to the notion of *Kurdayeti* (Kurdishness) and the peculiarities of the Kurdish experience. As both ideology and movement, nationalism is founded on difference. Its historical consciousness rests on a ‘national’ perception of history, throughout which the ‘nation’ maintains its cohesiveness despite historical changes and transformations;⁵⁹ historically, it obscures a good understanding of the past. In fact, nationalism usurps history in order to justify its distinctiveness from and its cultural superiority over others.

However, unlike a vague and static ‘Kurdish nationalism’, this study employs the concept of *Kurdayeti*, defined as struggle for Kurdish cultural and political rights, in order to simultaneously recognise such rights and be critical of the ideology of nationalism as such. Furthermore, ‘*Kurdayeti*’ represents a dynamic process, serves a better understanding of Kurdish histories in Iran, and reflects more effectively resistance against

⁵⁸ Rae, *State Identities*, 2

⁵⁹ See Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds), *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

the homogenising and oppressive policies of the modern Iranian state.⁶⁰ Like nationalism, *Kurdayeti* is also a worldview based on a modern, national understanding of self and history, which was a result of the transformation of historical consciousness by the early twentieth century. Indeed, as Andreas Wimmer rightly points out, nationalism is not ‘just a by-product of modern state formation [...] rather, modernity *itself* rests on a basis of ethnic and nationalist principles’.⁶¹ However, while in an Iranian context a distinctive Kurdish nationalism emerged alongside Persian nationalism, it preserved aspects of *Iraniyant* (Iranianness) both to define itself and construct an authentic past. Therefore, it is important to heed the cultural and historical affinities with the idea of Iran. For example, modern, national Kurdish historiography has substantially relied on race, ‘scientific’ and mythical, e.g. Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh* and the Aryan myth, constructions of a national Iranian past. It defined the Kurds as, in Huzni’s words, ‘an Iranian *qaum*’,⁶² which prior to modernity’s ‘ethnic minority’ only denoted kinship or a people who had distinct traits but (as a branch of a bigger family) also shared characteristics and origins with others. On the other hand, for the Kurds, throughout the twentieth century, ‘*Kurdayeti*’ developed as a popular and *legitimate* concept guiding various movements to achieve Kurdish ethnic rights in the framework of modern Iran, whereas ‘nationalism’, with the ascendancy of Marxism’s class theories especially from the 1970s onward, came to be perceived merely as a source of belligerent stances aiming to divide human society based on ‘nations’. Therefore, as it becomes more evident throughout this study, *Kurdayeti*, or any concept

⁶⁰ Denis Natali has attempted to explain *Kurdayeti* or ‘Kurdish national identity’ and ‘its similarities and variations in its manifestation [...] based on the nature of political space’ in the nation-states of Turkey, Iraq and Iran. While a useful approach, it is limited because it is only concerned with political aspects of the formation of national or ethnic identities. In contrast, the current study stresses a dynamic, multifaceted dual process of modernisation and homogenisation which also contains social and cultural aspects. See Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), Introduction.

⁶¹ Wimmer, *Shadows of Modernity*, 1.

⁶² Cf. Huzni, “Blossom of Spring”, 67; and Mardukh, *Mezhui Kurd*, 25.

which can reflect the dynamism of Iranian Kurdish history more effectively, is academically also more productive.

Iranian Kurdistan or Kurdish Society?

‘Iranian Kurdistan’ and ‘Kurdistan’ have political connotations. However, these concepts are used in a geographical sense to refer to the region occupied by the Kurds in the west of Iran. Moreover, referring to the province, ‘Iranian Kurdistan’, for the Iranian state has represented a discourse to sustain the relations of domination in favour of power. On the other hand, *Rozh-halat-i Kurdistan*, or Eastern Kurdistan, has become very popular among the Kurds as an alternative to the discourse of ‘Iranian Kurdistan’. However, while it is a challenge to a dominant discourse which denies the cultural and political rights of the Kurds in Iran, ‘Eastern Kurdistan’ is an act of spatialisation which inevitably creates imagined lines between the Kurds and other Iranian societies, overlooking their shared historical, social and cultural bonds. In contrast, this study adopts the concepts of Kurdish society (in Iran) and Iranian Kurdish society (see below) in order to acknowledge an independent existence of the Kurds in Iran on the one hand, and emphasise the values shared by various peoples on the other.

‘Kurdish society’ or *komalgai kurdawari*, a term often used by the Kurds, denotes an ethnic community residing in a specific geography, not in isolation but with intimate ties with other peoples or societies around them. Moreover, due to administrative divisions in Iran as a component of political modernisation, many Kurdish cities are excluded from the Kurdistan Province. Kurdish-speaking people in Iran call the area Kurdistan, which includes all Kurdish cities (in addition to many mixed Kurdish-Turkish, Kurdish-Lur, and Kurdish-Persian cities), thus ignoring the administrative divisions. Furthermore, ‘Kurdish society’ in this paper is employed without delineating ethnic and

political boundaries; it refers to an area where Kurds with a distinct language and culture have lived for centuries and their socio-economic, cultural and political ways of life have been shaped, especially in modern times, in connection with the other societies encompassing them. The concept is at the same time an alternative to political and national histories, and aims to encourage social change studies on Iranian Kurdish society.

Kurds: Qaum or Millat?

There is a persistent tension over the concepts of *qaum* (an ethnic group) and *millat* (nation), which has become one of the primary battlegrounds in the clash of Iranian (Persian) and Kurdish national narratives. *Qaum* justifies the former's denial of political and cultural rights of a community, which is, in turn, represented by the latter's definition of Kurds as *millat*, in need of recognition as such. As such, the national narratives derive their definitions from a misconception of these concepts, reinforced by constituent notions in the national narratives. On the one hand, the notions of national unity and territorial integrity, which constitute the pillars of Iranian national identity, continue to provide powerful grounds for the Iranian national narrative. On the other hand, the Kurdish national narrative continues to have historical and intellectual relevance in a situation in which the cultural and political rights of the Kurds in Iran are persistently and violently denied.

This confrontation over the concepts of *qaum* and *millat* in post-revolutionary Iran has emanated from the Islamic Republic's Constitution, which allows limited cultural rights for other ethnic communities (that is, non-Persian speakers), defined as *aqvam* (sing. *qaum*), not as *millat*. The Constitution in this respect was based on a definition of the Kurdish community as an inextricable part of a unified Iranian nation. Nevertheless, it also reflected the pressure on behalf of various elements of the community to improve

their cultural positions. Therefore, in the continuous clash of national narratives, *qaum*, which denotes a group of people with distinct characteristics and similarities with other peoples, is redefined as an undeveloped nation, presumably not yet prepared to form an independent state. This is a meaning which has served power and continues to sustain the current relations of domination.⁶³ By contrast, the Kurdish national narrative endeavours to prove the Kurds are a 'ripe' nation, and justifies its claim to nationhood by referring to a common descent, a specific land with a distinct history, language, and popular culture. Any study of the Kurds in Iran, therefore, needs to treat such concepts not as self-evident but as power-serving ideas. In this regard, critical theories of nation and nationalism, which are followed by new perspectives on these concepts, provide firm foundations for an intellectual confrontation against national narratives, including their invented definitions and reconstructed histories, which are closely linked to both political power and political mobilisation.

In the last few decades, a modernist approach to the nationalist discourse of the nineteenth century has contributed considerably to our understanding of nation and the nation-state. These theories can be subdivided into various subgroups which explain these modern phenomena from different perspectives.⁶⁴ In short, this modernist approach regards these concepts as both relatively modern (hence modernist) and historically

⁶³ Ideology as meaning in the service of power is discussed in John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* (UK: Polity Press, 1990), 6-7.

⁶⁴ Nation as an imagined community and a product of print capitalism is represented in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 37-47; nation as a product of industrialisation is discussed in Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); whilst for Anthony Smith nationalism is not only an ideology but is also a cultural phenomenon which is closely related to national identity: Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 19-42; nation and nationalism as inventions of the nineteenth century Europe are represented in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-15 and in Eli Kedouri, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1971), 1-188; and for nation as narration, see Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

contingent phenomena, and defines itself against the idea of nation as an entity dating back to time immemorial. One of the main reasons for the emergence of this modernist approach was the failure of theories of modernisation.⁶⁵

Perspectives on nation and nationalism continue to transform. For example, Roger Brubaker's study on nationhood and national identities in Eastern Europe emphasises the existence of an outside homeland.⁶⁶ His study reveals how cases of national identities can be different. For the Kurds, an outside homeland has not been relevant (See Chapter 2), and this demands that one go beyond Brubaker's study, however valuable and insightful, to explain Kurdish identity. As mentioned earlier, another important study in this regard is Andreas Wimmer's *Shadow of Modernity*, which explains nationalism and ethnic politics as pillars on which modernity rests. Therefore, the above theories are employed in this research also to initiate a new approach in studies of national identities, in this case Kurdish identity, which have the potential to contribute to the existing perspectives on nations and nationalism. Furthermore, studies of the history of Iran from such perspectives have theoretically and considerably enriched our understanding of the histories and politics of modern Iran.⁶⁷

Kurdish-Iranian?

The concept of 'Kurdish-Iranian' does not repudiate *Kurdish* histories, nor does it deny ethnic, political and human rights, or a people's claims to political autonomy or the right to self-determination. It serves three purposes in this study. First, it represents an

⁶⁵ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3 and 1-24.

⁶⁶ Roger Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶⁷ Cf. Touraj Atabaki (ed.), *Iran in the 20th Century: Historiography and Political Culture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009); Ali M. Ansari, *Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power and the State* (US: University of Washington Press, 2008).

alternative to national historiography, practiced by national narratives. Secondly, it refers to the heterogeneity of the Kurds as members of *various*, diverse Kurdish societies in different nation-states, on the one hand, and underlines historical, socio-economic, political as well as cultural bonds between Kurdish society and other linguistically different societies in Iran, on the other. Furthermore, it defies a homogenous approach which overlooks the diversity of Kurdish societies. It is legitimate to inquire of the author of a recent annotated bibliography of Kurdish culture and society, *which* Kurdish society are they referring to when they claim that ‘Kurdish society is still basically tribal’?⁶⁸ Finally, ‘Kurdish-Iranian’ demonstrates an awareness of the fact that any analysis of modern Kurdish society in Iran ought to be done in the context of, and not separated from, the formation of modern Iran, and in the light of its socio-economic, political and cultural transformations.

SOURCE MATERIALS

A vast range of primary and secondary sources constitute this thesis’s source materials. To sketch an image of Kurdish society in the early twentieth century, I have relied on travelogues, the memoirs of prominent literary figures, and their literary works. I explored the valuable reference tools of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, both printed and the online second edition, and critically engaged with the interesting works of the earlier authors of studies on the Kurds. At the same time, I benefited from more recent statistical and informative works on the modernisation of Iran. For primary sources on the era of the White Revolution, I have used official statistics, newspapers and scholarly journals of the time. These sources include books which contain statistics and information on, for example, development programmes and various state organisations.

⁶⁸ Meho and Maglaughlin, *Kurdish Culture and Society*, 4.

The National Archives (TNA) in London was particularly useful for its wide range of sources in the forms of correspondence and reports, which occupied me for weeks.⁶⁹ On the cultural and educational aspects of modernisation, Iran's leading universities' academic journals and the Ministry of Education's educational reports and articles proved priceless, covering the entire Pahlavi era.

Furthermore, in addition to secondary literature, a critical reading of books published in the decades following the Second World War enabled me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the era of the White Revolution. The literature in Iranian studies concerned with the era provided me with valuable information and analyses of significant themes. In addition to historiographical works on the period, a case in point is Gholam Reza Afkhami's *The Life and the Times of the Shah*, which stands as a collective effort and contains valuable primary source information.

Finally, a number of interviews were conducted with members of the generation of the 1960s and 1970s who, in various capacities of teacher, judge, doctor and cultural or political activists, had witnessed the impact of the era of the White Revolution on Kurdish society. Memoirs form a significant part of Kurdish collective memory, while interviews help the researcher to understand the past. For this study, the published memoirs and interviews are, as Lynn Abrams argues, 'means of accessing not just information but also signification, interpretation and meaning'.⁷⁰ This study maintains this approach to oral history throughout the manuscript.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Records and catalogues held by the National Archives are cited in this order: 'Title, (other references), date, TNA, Reference.

⁷⁰ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

⁷¹ For more on oral history, cf. Donal A. Ritchie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Part I: The Formation of Modern Kurdish-Iranian Society

The knowledge/science [‘ilm] of history will enhance wisdom, it is a means to erudition, the truthfulness of views, and to prudence.

[Rephrasing Mirkhand (d.1498),] Sharaf Khan Bitlisi, *The Sharafnameh* (1598), 9.

A just estimation of or undistorted communication with the past is simultaneously to believe that the present can be significantly altered for the better. The result might not be progress, with all the questionable assumptions of continuity that entails, but it would make a difference.

Paul Hamilton, *Historicism*, 6.

Chapter 1: The integration of Kurdish Society into Modern Iran

ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY KURDISH SOCIETY

Insufficient research and the lack of evidence hinder any attempt to depict social conditions prior to modern times and allow generalisation and speculation too. A limited scope and slow pace of change until the modern times did not connote the absence of change. Ever since the fifteenth century the Kurdish region had been caught up in the rivalries between formidable confederacies of Akquyunlu and Qaraqyunlu in the early modern times and then until the twentieth century between the Ottoman and Iranian Empires, the policies of which shaped the Kurdish societies' social and political structures. Meanwhile, various Kurdish Emirates or principalities ruled over the Kurds, oversaw an economy, exemplified by markets or handcraft industry, and promoted cultural activities. Originated in philosophical, theological as well as literary movements of past centuries, religious education centres and literary innovations spread to more regions, embodied by an increasing number of literary figures.¹ Nevertheless, modernity distinguished itself by its unprecedented speed of social transformation.

In the nineteenth century, the region experienced major regional and imperial wars which paved the way for the unprecedented political and economic presence of Britain and Russia in the Ottoman and Qajar Empires. The Kurdish Emirates eventually faded away as the result of the empires' centralisation policies which aimed to strengthen and modernise the state in the face of the military and political onslaught of European powers.

¹ Cf. Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi*, trans. Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim (London: Eland, 2010).

The integration of the economies of the region into the world market by the end of the century resulted in an unequal trading balance with the effect that it made these economies exporters of raw materials and importers of manufactured goods.² Consequently, as Masoud Karshenas argues in the case of Iran, free trade led to the peripheralisation of these economies in a world economy,³ which by the end of the century, as Eric Hobsbawm explains, had been effectively and permanently divided into ‘advanced’ and ‘underdeveloped’ as the result of political and industrial revolutions.⁴ Consequently, structural reforms in the regional states to modernise and strengthen economy and society followed. As regards the Kurds, this subsequently transformed the pre-modern power-relations based on Empire-Emirate with the effect that the rule of the ‘autonomous’ Emirates ended and the direct authority of the central state over the Kurdish regions through its representatives followed.

The integration of the Ottoman and Qajar Empires in the world market had undoubtedly engaged the Kurds in a wider regional trade. Mrs Bishop, a missionary, observed in her journey in Kurdistan around 1890 that,

Long before reaching Sujbulak [modern Mahabad] there were indications of the vicinity of a place of some importance, caravans going both ways, asses loaded with perishable produce, horsemen and foot passengers, including many fine-looking Kurdish women unveiled, and walking with a firm masculine stride, even when carrying children on their backs.⁵ Sujbulak, the capital of Northern Persian Kurdistan, and the residence of a governor, is quite an important *entrepôt* for furs, in which

² Masoud Karshenas, *Oil, State and Industrialisation in Iran* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), Ch. 2. For example, ‘while in 1844 more than 70 percent of Iranian exports were composed of handicraft manufactures, by 1910 the share of manufactures, with the exception of carpet, was reduced to virtually nil’. Ibid., 48.

³ Ibid., 47-48.

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 181.

⁵ Isabella Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, Vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1891), 207. According to Bishop, the city had ‘twenty small mosques, three *hammams* [public bath], some very inferior caravansaries and a few coffee houses’ and its *bazaar* well supplied. Ibid., 206.

it carries on a large trade with Russia, and a French firm, it is said, buys up fur rugs to the value of several hundred thousand francs annually.⁶

In addition to the regional trade, the economy was characterised by an inter-trade system involving towns, tribal and village communities, which lived in conditions devoid of a sanitation system;⁷ wheel-carts and quadrupeds were used as means of transportation. A nomadic and rural life had made people economically self-sufficient, while they continued to benefit from cross-border trades before its interruption by the modern state, which identified it as an act of ‘smuggling’ in order to make it illegal. Kurdish society was a feudal society under the yoke of *darabags* or *aghas* (landowners) who ruled over *ra’yats* (servants). The *agha* and the tribal chief owned both the land and the *jutiar* (Ku. peasant) class who cultivated the land. Although historically Kurdish societies (including urban, settled, nomadic, and tribal) possessed distinct language and culture, socio-economically they were not radically different in comparison with other communities such as Baluchis, Lurs, Persians, Azeris, and Turkomans who demographically contributed to the ethnic structure of Iran. Based on nineteenth century travelogues and anthropological accounts, it seems that until the expansion of trade in modern times, various nomadic, tribal, and settled Kurdish social organisations were geographically scattered and socio-economically not compactly connected.⁸ Nomads depended on cattle so were the tribes and settled communities whose economic resources also included cultivated lands, vineyard, orchards, fruit, wheat and barley. There were limited resources

⁶ Ibid., 207.

⁷ Ibid., 208.

⁸ Cf. C. Rich, *A Narrative of Residence in Koordistan* (London 1836); James B. Fraser, *Narratives of a Journey into Khurasan in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London 1825); Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, V. 2; and, first published in 1915, Sir Mark Sykes, *The Chalifs’ Last Heritage* (UK: Garnet Publishing, 2002).

as regards cash crops and few markets. However, this began to change effectively with the expansion of trade, the emergence of a modern economy, urbanisation and the availability of better roads with the effect that dairy products, meat and grain found new markets in growing urban centres. The expansion of trade and increasing movements of people upgraded economic trade, symbolised by regional markets where various linguistically and culturally distinct people continued to trade.⁹ As regards the tribes, constant tribal conflicts originated in their desire to appropriate other tribes' territories as well as their economic and military resources. Unsurprisingly, authoritarian centralising modernisation elicited strong opposition on behalf of powerful Kurdish tribes who had enjoyed a long-standing political authority legitimised in many cases by religion.¹⁰ Moreover, wealth and military arsenals were in the possession of the *agha* or the *Sheikh*, the chief religious authority. In contrast, the wider population suffered from harsh living conditions, economic exploitation of the ruling class and social injustice while notions of hygiene and healthcare were absent.

James B. Fraser who travelled to a number of regions in central and northwest Iran in the early 1820s warns against exotic narratives wherein false impressions of that land 'are calculated to shut out all disagreeable impressions of poverty and misery, and to substitute for them those of population and riches'.¹¹ According to him,

⁹ See Sykes's observation of Kurdish and Armenian markets in Sykes, *Last Heritage*, 403 and Ch. V.

¹⁰ A case in point is the famous Barzani tribal community. For a brief account see William Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic of 1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 47-54. Referring to the Young Turks government, Sir Mark Sykes argued that the aim of the policy of the settlement of tribes was 'the pacification of so-called turbulent [Kurdish] tribes, who, as history has shown, never gave the least trouble to a just or even moderately strong government, and, who, if treated with ordinary kindness, are a bulwark of strength in time of war'. For this see Sykes, *Last Heritage*, 404.

¹¹ Fraser, *Narratives of a Journey*, 160.

We hear little or nothing of the state of the people, or the face of the country; these may have been poor, wretched, and desert as now; while the king and his court were dazzling strangers by their magnificence and ostentation, these were probably supported as at present, by grinding his unfortunate subjects to the bones; the population may have been as scanty, the cultivation as rare as at this day [...] An estimate of the condition of any country formed from descriptions of scenes in which kings, nobles, and rich men are almost the only actors, would be as fallacious, as a judgment of the real state of England or France, founded on accounts of the transactions at Carleton House, or the Louvre.¹²

Applying to the whole land of Iran, Fraser's depiction of a situation, where 'the class of farmers and cultivators' lived 'continually under a system of extortion and injustice', illustrates distressing social conditions of the time.¹³ The structure of the Kurdish society was characterised by powerful tribes, the agricultural activity in the rural areas by non-tribal groups, small towns and a vast number of villages. The fact that Kurdistan up till the 1960s witnessed a sluggish urbanisation confirms this picture of early twentieth-century Kurdish society, although Reza Shah's forced settlement of the tribes and, in later decades, their more voluntary settlements, benefited population growth in both village and city. Rural life was characterised by an unequal relationship between the landowner and the peasant who had to provide the former with various forms of rents in order to ensure survival, residency in the village and cultivate the land.

Kinship, clan and other ties characterised social bonds, while equally strong were also religious loyalties to genealogically authoritative *sheikhs* and spiritual adherence to various Sufi movements which originated religious orders and institutions such as *tariqa*

¹² Ibid., 160-61.

¹³ Ibid., 173.

and *khanaqa*, respectively.¹⁴ *Shari‘a* (Islamic law) and *‘urf* (tradition) regulated the social and religious life, and, in spite of being mostly identified as the followers of the Shafi‘i legal school in Sunni Islam, the Kurdish region religiously came to be known as very diverse, incorporating communities affiliated to other religions or schools of law. Although Kurdish culture was inseparable from religious values and institutions, *din* (religion) and *‘ilm* (knowledge/science), as it was understood in pre-modern times, had historically coexisted and not opposed each other. Texts by Kurdish authors who were at the same time devoted religious individuals reflected this coexistence. In his history of Kurdistan (1597), Sharaf Khan defines history as *‘ilm* which enhances ‘wisdom to find truth’ while, upon encounter with modernity, Hajji Qadir Koyi’s poetry in the end of the nineteenth century was distinguished by his appeal to science and reason in order to elevate the Kurds to the rank of a ‘nation’.¹⁵ Scientific subjects formed important parts of the curriculum in religious schools where, for example, astronomy and astrology, language, and Aristotle’s logic were taught.¹⁶ However, this relatively harmonious coexistence was also partly due to the fact that religion and the social position of its representative class had not yet faced the onslaught of modern natural sciences.

Furthermore, illiteracy was widespread while education was ‘in the hands of a few learned families’.¹⁷ Attached to the mosque, *Hojra* and *khanaqa* (religious centres of education) trained *fāqeh* (Ku. religious student) and *mala* (Ku. the teacher of *shari‘a*) whom upon graduation led religious duties in villages.¹⁸ They studied religious texts but

¹⁴ For more discussions on such terms see M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 220-23 and 81.

¹⁵ See, respectively, Sharaf Khan Bitlisi, *The Sharafnameh: The Complete History of Kurdistan* (in Persian) (Iran: Asatir, 1377 [1998]), 9; and Haji Qadir Koyi, *Diwan* (Kurdish) (Stockholm: Nefel, 2004), 106-07.

¹⁶ ‘Abd-Allāh Mardūk, "The Madrasa in Sunni Kurdistan," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/education-vi-the-madrasa-in-sunni-kurdistan>, accessed 15 March 2017.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

also Kurdish, Persian and Arabic literature.¹⁹ Both religious and literary figures built spiritual and intellectual bridges between regions until the emerging nation-states effectively hindered the regional connection between peoples and created fixed, physical borders instead. Until the mid-twentieth century, the fabric of Kurdish literates was composed of mainly *hojra*-educated, who conveyed ideas and influenced thought. The modern states' modernisations had already begun to affect this composition by both introducing and popularising a nationally inspired modern education, which gradually but effectively revolutionised the existing systems of learning.

The modern state also introduced notions of healthcare and hygienisation. Orientalist accounts on the nineteenth and early twentieth century claim that the Kurds were almost unaware of healthcare and did not pay attention to hygiene while infectious diseases among them were widespread and the nomads suffered from rheumatism.²⁰ The foundations of public education and healthcare in Iranian Kurdistan—this applies to other peripheral regions as well—were laid down in the reign of Reza Shah (1925-1941), however, these institutions spread in the second half of the twentieth century, specifically in the era of the White Revolution (1963-1979).

A weak infrastructure in a mountainous land hindered communication and had a negative effect, as noted by Ervand Abrahamian, also on the expansion of trade.²¹ These contributed to the isolation of villages which thus had to rely on a self-sufficient economy. In the course of the nineteenth century, the movement of multilingual Kurdish literates, poets and religious educated had compensated for the absence of the means of

¹⁹ Cf. Maref Khaznadar, *The History of Kurdish Literature: The 19th Century and the Early 20th Century* (Kurdish), ed. Dr Kurdistan Mukriani, 4 vols. (Kurdistan, Hawler: The Education Ministry Publication, 2004).

²⁰ Nikitin, *Kord Wa Kordestan*, 230-31.

²¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 13.

communication, and their literary endeavours intertwined with social and political developments in Kurdish societies under the Emirates.²² Their journeys and the ideas they conveyed were significant for spreading knowledge as well as connecting various regions.²³ However, this does not conceal a closed structure of Kurdish societies which seemed to be uninformed about important political upheavals of the time. For example, Kurdish literature (represented mainly by poetry) did not reflect the impact of movements such as Sheikhism or Babism in the first half of the nineteenth century that preceded later movements of the century and ultimately that of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. The lack of data can also be attributed to the ignorance of researchers who have been conventionally more interested in origins and genealogies of peoples and ruling families. Nevertheless, ineffective communications system, or complete lack of it, made these regions politically isolated.

Women were active participants in agriculture, animal husbandry, the village and nomadic life and in the upbringing of the children. While approaching a Kurdish town around 1890, Mrs Bishop observed 'Kurdish women unveiled, and walking with a firm masculine stride, even when carrying children on their backs'.²⁴ Orientalist accounts depict Kurdish women capable of 'hosting strangers in the absence of the men of the household', brave and active.²⁵ Carpet weaving based on women's labour satisfied the *agha* household's luxurious needs and the existing carpet trade as well. This craft

²² See Khaznadar, *The History of Kurdish Literature*.

²³ Maref Khaznadar, *The History of Kurdish Literature: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Kurdish), Vol. 4 (Kurdistan, Hawler: The Education Ministry, 2004), 21. Another example is Sayyid Abdulrahim known as Mavlavi (1806-1883) who frequently travelled to Iran.

²⁴ Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, V. 2, 207. Unveiled Kurdish women attracted all Europeans like Sykes who contrasted them to (Turkish) women in 'Turkified' Anatolia. Sykes, *Last Heritage*, 405.

²⁵ Cf. Nikitin, *Kord Wa Kordestan*, 223-28.

continued to remain a permanent aspect of Kurdish rural life.²⁶ Women also rose to preeminent literary positions but only among the literate, the upper class and ruling elites of Kurdistan. Mastura Ardalan (1804-1848), known as Mastura Kurdistani, in the ruling Ardalan family was a historian and poet. Other ruling families such as Soran and Jaf also yielded ruling women. In the course of the sixteenth century when the Ottoman governor imprisoned Suleiman *bag*, the *mir* (Ku. ruler) of the powerful Soran Emirate, Suleiman's sister, Khanzad, ruled the Emirate for a few years.²⁷ 'Adila Khanim, the governor of Halabja in the early twentieth century came from the famous Jaf tribe. Both are remembered by posterity as just and capable rulers.

As Abrahamian has noted 'the nineteenth century remains the dark age for Iranian statistics'.²⁸ This, as regards the Kurds, extends to 1956 when the government carried out the first official census. Moreover, porous geographical and cultural boundaries between various communities in that century render it difficult to collect data on a society which had not yet been defined as 'Iranian Kurdistan'. It is nonetheless estimated that of a population of nearly seven million living in Qajar Iran in the 1850s, 800,000 were Kurds.²⁹ This high number also includes the population resided in regions which later did not form parts of Iranian Kurdistan. According to *Vaqaye 'Negar-e Kordestani* (Kurdistan Gazette), the Kurdish region under the Qajar rule had a population of 600,000 in 1874. It was administratively divided into 17 blocs, each comprised of a *qasaba* or small town administering a number of villages, and a city, i.e. Sanandaj with a population of 24,744.³⁰

²⁶ The French ambassador, Eugene Aubin, recalls in his travelogue (1907-1908) 'beautiful carpets which had been weaved for the *agha* by women in their free time in winter'. Eugene Aubin, *Iran Emrouz 1907-1908* [Iran Today] (Iran: Zawarn, 1362 [1984-5]), 110.

²⁷ Maref Khaznadar, *The History of Kurdish Literature: From the Beginning until the Fourteenth Century* (Kurdish), Vol. 1 (Kurdistan, Hawler: Education Ministry, 2001), 17-18.

²⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 12.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mehdi Rezayi, "A Study of Low-Birth Rate in Iranian Kurdistan," PhD Thesis, University of Tehran, 2011.

Bishop, who published her memoir in 1891 after traveling to Kurdistan, claims that Sauj Blagh (modern Mahabad), an economically important town in northern part, had a population of 5,000.³¹ Lastly, to these figures on the number of the Kurdish population we should add other Kurdish communities who lived in other parts of Iran, for example, in Khurasan in northeast and Mazandaran in north.

Therefore, such dominant socio-economic features, a landowner-peasant relation, geographical obstacles, weak infrastructure and ineffective means of communications, a self-sufficient, predominantly rural and illiterate society continued to characterise Iranian Kurdistan until the first half of the twentieth century.

MODERNITY

The Constitutional Revolutions of the early twentieth century in both Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire marked the effective encounter of the Kurds with *modernity*, a framework in which European ideas assumed cultural superiority. Modernity introduced the notions of law, justice system, progress, education and representation. It also inaugurated ideas of nation, nation-state and fixed border, reflected in later political developments. Consequently, the political landscape of the Kurdish region was profoundly altered in the decades following the Constitutional Revolution. Documents pertaining to the constitutional years until the outbreak of the First World War demonstrate the impact of the revolution and its ideas throughout the Kurdish region. Correspondence exchanged between the *Majlis* and *anjoman-e Eyalati* or the provincial representative body of Kurdistan along with complaints made by guilds and prominent

³¹ Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, V. 2, 207.

figures to the *Majlis* are framed around such concepts to justify their works, support their critiques and present their demands more effectively.³²

In general, two aspects of Kurdish society, tribal and non-tribal, began to be reshaped in different ways. Historiography and anthropology have been lopsided on Kurdish tribal history. This is understandable because a large portion of the population lived under the rule of the tribes, which were known for their military prowess, economic resources and territorial possessions (see Figure 2). The political changes in Iran elicited resistance on behalf of the tribes such as the Kalhors and the Shikaks. The Kalhor tribes presumably preferred the status quo and in 1911 ‘supported the abortive military move of Salar ad Dola against the Constitutionalist government in Tehran’.³³ Located in the northwest of Iran and estimated to have numbered around 2000 families in 1921, the Shikak confederacy under the leadership of the famous Simko continued to challenge the Iranian government’s authority with demands to secure a ‘Kurdish’ rule.³⁴ Although, the ideas of ‘nation’ and ‘nation-state’ inspired the rebellion of Simko in Kurdistan, in retrospect it did not demonstrate political cohesiveness in that direction. The confederacy spread over a vast region between the Ottoman and Qajar Empires. It was consisted of two main branches of ‘Abduiy and Kardar, each of which was divided into eight and thirteen tribes, respectively. The Shikaks were nomads and were engaged in animal husbandry as their source of economic power. According to Sanar Mamedi, one of the later leaders of the powerful Mamedi tribe (in the Kardar branch), ‘until 1941 the Shikaks

³² Cf. document 31 and 32, correspondence of spring 1911, in Reza Azari Sharzayi (ed.), *Asnade Baharestan (1): Gozideye Asnadi Az Waqaye' Mashroote Dar Kordestan Wa Kermanshahan* [Bahrestan Documents (1): A Selection of Documents Pertaining to the Constitutional Events in the Kurdistan and Kermanshahan [Provinces]] (Tehran: Library of Islamic Consultative Assembly, 1385 [2007]), 68-73.

³³ Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 7.

³⁴ According to the 1960 census in Iran, there were 4,400 families (in Iran). For this see Mohammadrasoul Hawar, *Simko W Bizutnawe-Y Natawayet-I Kurd* [Simko and The Kurdish National Movement] (Sweden: APEC, 1995), 210. Lord Curzon’s estimation in 1892 was 1,500 families.

disdained agriculture. They looked down at the Kirmanjs [settled, farming Kurds] and considered them as their own servants, while coercing them into forced labour'.³⁵ The confederacy lost unity and its political power with the emergence of modern, centralised states. The quelling of the rebellion of Simko by the early 1930s was followed by forced, and later more voluntary, settlements of the Shikaks as well as their forced migration to other parts of Iran. Moreover, modern territorial borders resulted in the division of the confederacy and reorientation of its subtribes' loyalties to different states.

Moreover, based on contemporary appeals addressed to the *Majlis* for help, Kurdish tribes interrupted the processes of the formation of provincial administration and political participation of the population in the Kurdish region because these went against their political and economic powers.³⁶ However, decisively defeated by Reza Shah, Kurdish tribes in Iran re-emerged with his abdication following the outbreak of the Second World War. They played a crucial role in the formation of the Kurdistan Republic of 1946, which, ironically, both as an idea and a political platform *was not* the culmination of tribal politics. They formed the Republic's military backbone and their chiefs were engaged in negotiations with the Soviet, the Azerbaijani and Iranian governments.³⁷ Tribal interests, however, prevented unity in action and even caused defection and further intertribal conflicts.³⁸ The end of the Republic in January 1947, and the intensification of the modernisation of Iran effectively diminished their political power.³⁹

³⁵ Sanar Mamedî, *Khaterat Wa Dardha* [Memorandum and Pains], Vol. 1 (Sweden: Alfabet Maxima, 2000), 14 and 14-16.

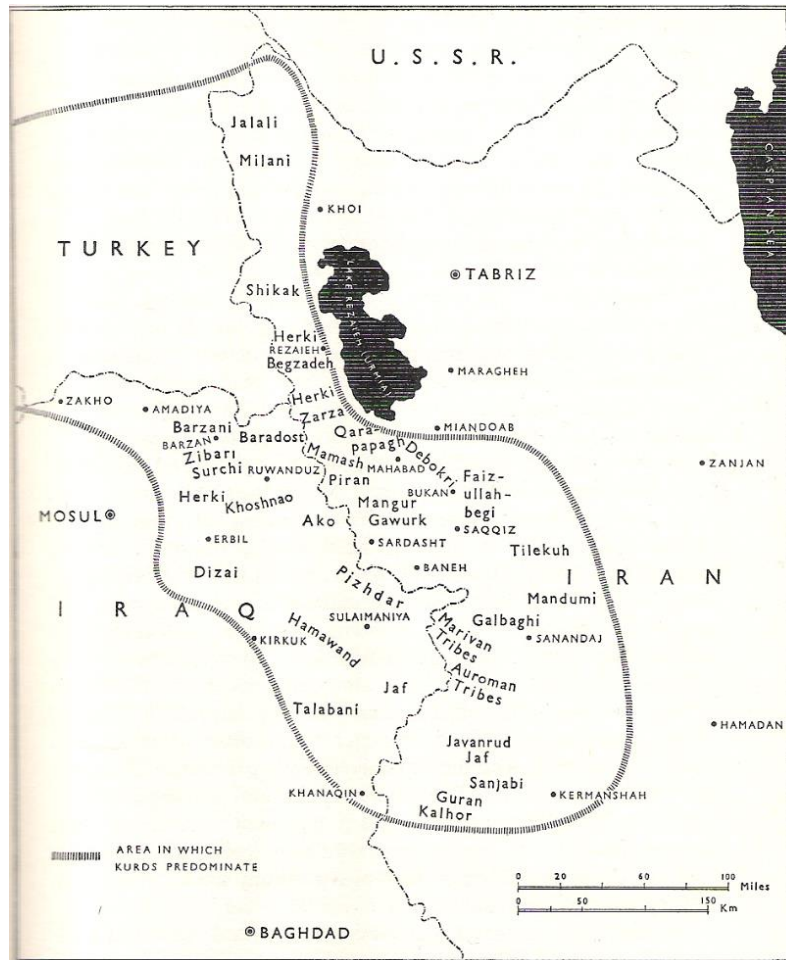
³⁶ Cf. document 54, which contains a correspondence as of 1911, in Sharzayî, *Asnade Baharestan*, 98-101.

³⁷ As Eagleton noted, 'the Republic overcame the most disrupting factors in large-scale tribal movements, i.e. the foraging which often led to looting'. Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 94.

³⁸ 'The Kurds of Persia', dated 28 March 1946, TNA, FO371/52702 E2782/104/34 confirms a previous statement that 'The Kurds of Persia are hopelessly divided among themselves'.

³⁹ For more on Kurdish tribes see Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 16-23.

2. Main tribal areas in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan [first half of the twentieth century].



Source: Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 19.

Insofar as non-tribal Kurdistan was concerned, Iran's Constitutional Revolution inspired the formation of *anjomans* or societies by Kurdish literates, for example in major cities like Sanandaj, Kermanshah and Sauj Blagh, followed by the publication of irregular journals.⁴⁰ It engaged the Kurds with the ideas of law, *Majlis* and representation.⁴¹ It inspired many to attempt to spread modern schools, a process which was interrupted not only because of political instability but also because of lack of support.⁴²

Furthermore, nationalist movements and ideas began to spread manifest in various Kurdish political movements which exerted regional impacts too. The modern Iranian nation-state's educational, political and socio-economic requirements shaped a Kurdish urbanised (non-tribal) environment from which a new educated generation emerged. Organisational and ideological approaches attest to this fact and are symbolised by the first political organisation, *Komala-i Zhiyanawai-i Kurd* (Ku. the Organisation of Kurdish Revival, 1942-1945) or *Zhe Kaf*. This nationalist, progressive organisation was founded by a group of urbanised educated or, in Eagleton's words, 'middle class citizens' who also paved the way for the formation of the Kurdistan Republic.⁴³ Furthermore, the modern administrative structure of the Republic differentiated its functions in various ministries such as Health, Education, Economics, Labour, Justice, Road and Agriculture. This simultaneously reflected preoccupation with reforms and economic plans as well as with ideas which tribal politics could not have and did not intend to, induce.⁴⁴ Furthermore, political demands increasingly began to reflect socio-economic and political

⁴⁰ Muhammad Mardukh claims to have founded *Anjoman-e Sedaqat* in Sanandaj in the time of the Constitutional Revolution. Mardukh, *Mezhui Kurd*, 483.

⁴¹ For the representatives from the Kurdish region see *Kaveh*, Year 1, No. 29 and 30, 8-9.

⁴² A correspondence as of May 1911 addressed to the *Majlis* complains about 'bad intentions' on behalf of some [powerful people] and demands the reopening of *Ma'refat* school which had been functioning for the previous three years. For this see document 49 in Sharzayi, *Asnade Baharestan*, 91-93.

⁴³ Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 33. For their names see *ibid.*, 133.

⁴⁴ For a list of the Republic's ministries see *ibid.*, 134.

transformations. For example, the ideas of self-determination and autonomy in the framework of Iran had gained grounds in political vocabularies by the early 1920s. As regards these ideas and resulting from prolonged political instability, a contributing factor was intensifying tension between a growing will for centralisation of power and decentralisation represented by provincial councils.⁴⁵ Simultaneously, although nationalism inspired separatist demands, these demands gradually lost touch with reality, that is, socio-economic and political situations. In contrast, *autonomy in the framework of Iran* increasingly reflected the dual process of modernisation and homogenisation of identity which reproduced the tension between centralisation and decentralisation. This process paradoxically accelerated socio-economic integrations of ethnically distinctive societies in modern Iran, on the one hand, and created conditions for the survival of their ethnic identities through ethnic struggle, on the other (see Chapter 2).

Finally, new borders and their fixation shaped modern Kurdish societies territorially. Borders were redefined as the result of two processes: first, the idea of a powerful centralised state which, in turn, would end cross-border tribal conflicts; and secondly, attempts to serve socio-economic interests of Britain and Russia and secure the production of oil—this was done with absolute neglect of the tribal populations' socio-economic interests.⁴⁶ Indeed, the famous Sykes–Picot Agreement had been preceded by a common commission, authorised by Russia and England and led by Vladimir Minorsky and Sir Arnold Wilson, between December 1913 and October 1914.⁴⁷ Oil had become a

⁴⁵ See Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 54-59. For example, since the start of the Constitutional Revolution, Iranian Azerbaijan had become a testing ground for such ideas exemplified famously in the short-lived government of Khyiabani (1918-1920), for which see *ibid.*, 46-51.

⁴⁶ Sir Arnold Wilson, *Sw. Persia: A Political Officer's Diary 1907-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 267-98.

⁴⁷ The 1913 commission's work was based on previous attempts by Britain and Russia since 1847, *ibid.*, 269. The new commission 'procured the consent of the Sublime Court Porte and the Imperial Persian Government to a definite frontier line from Fao on the Persian Gulf to Ararat in the north', *ibid.*, 270.

primary factor and ‘it mattered less where the line should lie that it should be laid down definitely somewhere, for, until that had been done no development [in oil wells] was possible’.⁴⁸ In this respect, ‘a strong central government’ was advocated to put an end to ‘inter-tribal feuds and raids’ that had desolated the land and ruined villages.⁴⁹ Territorially, therefore, fixed geographical and cultural borders replaced hitherto permeable ones, effectively separating Iranian Kurdistan from other Kurdish societies, which were each ultimately redefined as a nation-state’s Kurdistan—modern Turkey and Syria did not recognise Kurdistan, whereas Iran’s and Iraq’s administrative divisions, albeit for different reasons (see below), consisted of a Kurdistan Province.

THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT WAR

Meanwhile, the Great War effectively interrupted the constitutionalist movement in Iran and paralysed attempts to implement modernising reforms. The legacy of the war proved to be enduring. Regions occupied by the Kurds suffered immensely and the presence of Russia, Britain and the Ottoman Empire in Iran and their rivalry in the north and northwest, where the Kurds lived, made this region one of the battlefields of the Great War. *Kaveh*, a contemporary journal published by a number of Iranian intellectuals in Berlin, included regular war reports and maps which illustrated the Kurdish region in the heart of the belligerent sides’ rivalries.⁵⁰ In the aftermath of the war, journals in the mid-1920s still reported ‘widespread poverty and unemployment’, urging the government to establish factories and pay more heed to agriculture.⁵¹ During the War, the Kurds suffered hunger and death in a great scale while mass migration in search of food took place several

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 284.

⁵⁰ *Kaveh*, 127-129.

⁵¹ *Ayandeh*, (1925) 1:82 and (1926) 13:7.

times: ‘waves after waves of [Kurdish speaking] people from Iran arrived in Sulaimaniya [in Ottoman Kurdistan] where the death toll had already reached ten per day. They begged and in some cases women sold their bodies in order to survive’.⁵² Nevertheless, in many respects the war had only exacerbated political and economic situations. Contemporary correspondence of the pre-war years from Kurdistan province complained about a sense of being abandoned ‘in the hands of *estebdad* [despotism] of the local rulers’ and in the face of the devastating impact of the presence of the Ottoman forces since the mid-1900s in some areas, frequent pillages and insecurity. Moreover, they uncover many cases of corruption and refer to the interruption of the expansion of *mo‘aref* or (modern) education by closing down schools in many areas.⁵³

Famine and hunger, cold winters and bad harvests in the 1920s and 1930s soon were to be followed by the outbreak of the Second World War, the drastic consequences of which exacerbated living conditions. The government introduced a system of rationing of staple food such as sugar, tea, bread, and cotton in Tehran in 1941 and later Ministry of Food is claimed to have issued ration cards to the senior officials in the provinces.⁵⁴ However, the absence of census data and widespread bribery and fraud rendered the system and also the distribution of food and ration cards insufficient and ineffective.⁵⁵ Geographical barriers and war presumably created additional hindrance for such efforts. Moreover, bread riots and political instability destroyed the system in many towns.⁵⁶ The exception was the Kurdish region administered by the Kurdish Republic in 1946, where

⁵² Rafiq Hilmi, *Yaddasht* [Notes] (Iraq: Roshinbiri Lawan Press, 1988), 32-3.

⁵³ Cf. documents 32 Sharzayi, *Asnade Baharestan*, 69-73.

⁵⁴ E. M. H. Lloyd, *Food and Inflation in the Middle East, 1940-45* (California: Stanford University Press, 1956), 240-41

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

the shortages of staple food were to some extent overcome due to the good harvest of 1944, the sale of the entire Kurdish tobacco supply to Russia, and the collection of taxes.⁵⁷

However, lingering inflation and shortages of food, exacerbated by a weak infrastructure and a fragile economy, continued into the Second World War and outlasted the reign of Reza Shah. For example, a widespread famine in Kurdistan which had followed the cold winter of 1947, brought about inhumane economic practices. As soon as the news reached Hemin that a young girl was being bartered for a sack of flour, he recalled in his famous *Tark u Run* (Dark and Light), he embarked to investigate and began to ask ‘a group of village women what was happening [...] they started to spit in the other man’s face who had intended to buy the girl, and [then] run to bring as much flour as they could find [to prevent the trade].’⁵⁸ Referring to all humanity and highlighting the consequences of the war in his own region, Hemin Mukriyani (Muhammad Amin Sheikhulslami, 1921-1986) maintained metaphorically that ‘while mankind in the twentieth century had created and used atom, radars, and even invaded the moon, I witnessed how human beings grazed in the grazing fields’.⁵⁹

In brief, a Kurdish man and woman in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was under the yoke of *agha* and tribal chiefs, and the literature mainly represented their class and ruling families. A self-sufficient economy and a weak infrastructure characterised the Kurdish region which was mainly rural with a number of small towns. Facilities to ameliorate social conditions were absent, so was the state itself except for its military ventures. The political developments since the early twentieth century originated political

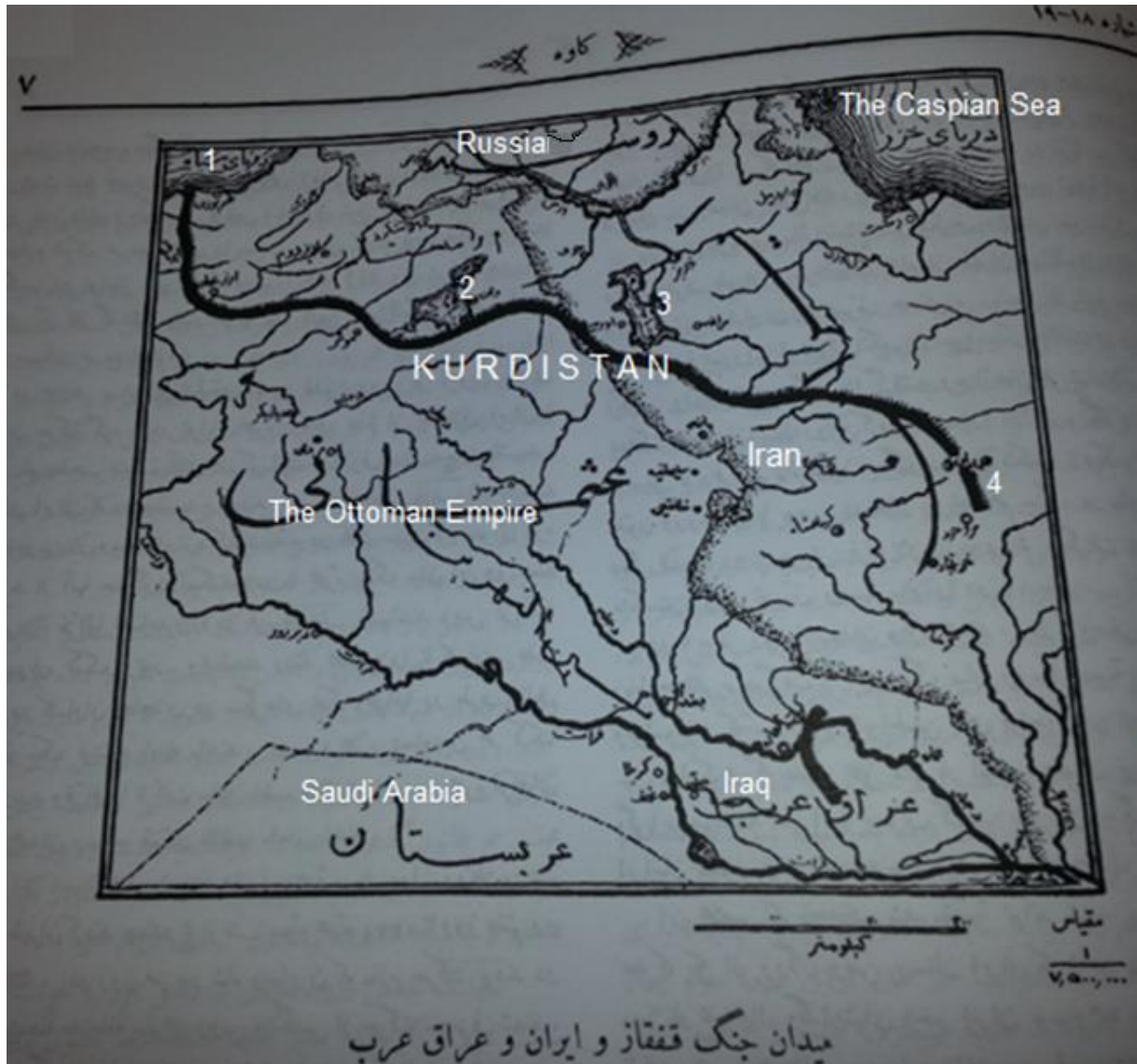
⁵⁷ Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 87-88

⁵⁸ Hemin Mukriyani, *Tarik W Run* [Dark and Light] (n.p.: n.p., 1974), 34-5.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

processes which, influenced by the dissemination of new ideas, war and political instability, began to reshape Kurdish tribal and non-tribal societies in Iran. Moreover, modern state and border effectively separated the Kurds in Iran from other Kurdish communities in adjacent regions while modernity in the shape of modern institutional, social and political ideas yielded an urbanised, educated generation who added a new aspect to Iran's Kurdish society hitherto dominated by tribes and the *agha* class. By the mid-twentieth century, the tribes' military and political power declined as the result of a centralising and modernising state's oppressive policies as well as socio-economic transformation. However, their ownership of the village and the peasant in an oppressive economic structure, ensured by their monopoly of the legitimate use of violence against the poor, survived. In general, redefined as an 'ethnic minority', socio-economic and political transformations facilitated the Kurds' socio-economic transformation into modern Iran. The next section deals with this unequal integration.

3. Kurdistan as a battlefield in the First World War.



The thick line in this modified map (texts in white are added) shows the battlefield from the Black Sea (1) through the Kurdish region, Lake Van (2) and Lake Urumia (3), to Hamadan (4) in South. The footnote reads 'the battlefield in Caucasus, Iran and the Arab Iraq'. Source: *Kaveh*, 127.

THE INTEGRATING TENDENCIES OF MODERNISATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The state-led modernisation and socio-economic change since the 1920s maintained their tendency to strengthen social, economic and cultural bonds between various societies in Iran. The prevalent modernising discourse of the time, reflected in contemporary journals such as *Ayandeh*, advocated the integration of Iranian Kurds by expanding socio-economic developments. Two other manifestations of this tendency included the Kurds' political and cultural demands, that began to revolve around autonomy *in the framework of Iran* and not *independence* in different historical conjuncture, and the intensified social change during the era of the White Revolution, which profoundly changed Iran in the same direction. In fact, this tendency determined the course of both state-led modernisation and transformation in Iran throughout the twentieth century with the effect that by the time of the 1979 Revolution Kurdish-Iranian society had become both socio-economically and culturally inseparable from modern Iran. However, the growth of such inseparable qualities never negated cultural or political demands embodied in *Kurdayeti*. Discussed in the next chapter, this refers to a paradox rather than a contradiction and to the way the relationship between modernisation and identity was determined by both these integrating tendencies and the resistance of *Kurdayeti*.

Following the constitutional era, the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41) is another significant era for its politics of modernisation, laying the foundations of modern institutions, despite sluggish socio-economic change, and modernising the political structure of Kurdish society along national lines. Politically, as the reign of Reza Shah regressed from the parliamentary rule and liberalism to an authoritarian and nationalist monarchy, it marked the end of the ideals of the Constitutional Revolution and the

formation of a centralised state;⁶⁰ a state which came to be firmly based on the pillars of modern Iranian identity, namely national unity (one nation one language) and territorial integrity.

KURDISTAN AND THE POLITICS OF MODERNISATION, 1920-1960

The modern social and political structures of Kurdish society was shaped by the process of the formation of a centralising and rationalising nation-state in Iran, the requirements of which determined its policies in Kurdistan. The early decades of the modern Iranian state were significant for an effective start towards the social integration of all linguistically and culturally distinctive societies in modern Iran. Politically integrating elements comprised both rationalising and coercive institutions, namely an efficient bureaucracy and a national army, while socially integrating elements included, but were not restricted to, educational, socio-economic and judicial reforms. Such reforms originated in the ideas and reforming efforts at least since the second constitutional *Majlis* in 1909 after Muhammad Ali Shah's anti-Constitutional coup failed and he was subsequently abdicated.⁶¹ In addition to war, as many intellectuals argue, the absence of 'national unity' and, crucially, the absence of 'public education' and resistance to European culture and ideas were explained as obstacles to reform and progress.⁶² Nevertheless, while in the spiritual sphere religious and secular thought yielded varied opinions on the roots of the 'backwardness' of Iran—in the material sphere there was a consensus to employ European advanced technology—a personified, central power never

⁶⁰ For more on this see Stephanie Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran: Opposition, Protest and Revolt, 1921-1941* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), Ch. 1.

⁶¹ *Kaveh*, Year 1, No. 27 (15 April 1918), 2-5.

⁶² *Kaveh*, Year 2, No. 1 (22 January 1921).

featured in such arguments.⁶³ An influential journal such as *Kaveh* (1916-1922) continuously emphasised Iranian national unity, Europeanisation of culture, public education and Persian language.⁶⁴ Noted by historians of Iran, in the intellectual sphere the argument was usually for a central authority, and this was also voiced by Kurdish intellectuals such as Muhammad Mardukh, who, celebrating Nowruz in 1919, wondered ‘why has not this strong and erudite [Iranian] state been able to end the chaos [in Kurdistan] in recent [post Constitutional] years?’⁶⁵

However, the emergence of Reza Khan (later Reza Shah) induced inclinations towards a powerful centralised state in order to end political instability, implement reforms, and ensure national unity and territorial integrity of Iran. Intellectuals and able statesmen such as Mahmud Afshar, Ali Akbar Davar and Muhammad Foroughi regarded Reza Shah vital for the creation of the modern, Iranian nation-state,⁶⁶ and although constitutionalists, including Hassan Taqizadeh, a veteran of the Constitutional Revolution, opposed the change of the dynasty for constitutional reasons, they regarded Reza Khan in the same way.⁶⁷ As an illustration of this popular attitude towards Reza Khan, in the struggle to establish a modern judicial system to introduce and enforce new laws many prominent figures had strived against cultural and religious obstacles until, as Foroughi recalls, ‘there was a total change of fortune [in their favour] with the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi’.⁶⁸ Support for the establishment of the dynasty also came from other layers of society. As

⁶³ On material and spiritual domains see Mehrdad Kia, "Persian Nationalism and the Campaign for Language Purification," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, No. 2 (1998), 9-10.

⁶⁴ *Kaveh*, Year 2, No. 1, 2.

⁶⁵ Mardukh, *Mezhui Kurd*, 628-29.

⁶⁶ For more on Foroughi see Ali M. Ansari, "Mohammad Ali Foroughi and the Construction of Civic Nationalism in Early Twentieth-Century Iran," in H. E. Chehabi, et al. (eds), *Iran in the Middle East: Transnational Encounters and Social History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

⁶⁷ Homa Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran: The Eclips of the Qajars and the Emergence of the Pahlavis* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 307.

⁶⁸ Mohammad Ali Foroughi, "Modernisation of Law," *Journal of Persianate Studies*, No. 3 (2010), 44.

Homa Katouzian concludes, in 1926 the emerging Pahlavi state claimed ‘a broad support among the country’s various influential elites’ such as landlords, provincial magnates and leading merchants.⁶⁹

The state in much of the first Pahlavi era endeavoured to fulfil the requisites for a modern, centralised nation-state as the institutional condition for the realisation of the long-standing will to reform, constantly interrupted by the presence and rivalry of the great powers in Iran and political instability.⁷⁰ Indeed, its efforts, however oppressive, were also dictated by historical facts—a prolonged instability and indirect colonialism—as well as by the need of a modern state to function effectively. Ultimately, however, both Pahlavi eras witnessed the concentration of political authority in the monarch, whereas many Iranian intellectuals had stipulated a progressive (*erteqayi*), constitutional system to tackle ‘the unsteadiness of the central government, the chaos of the central administration, political instability and insecurity’ against a ‘regressive’ (*qahqaraiy*) administration under previous Qajar kings.⁷¹ Instead, except for the period between the outbreak of the Second World War, which entailed severe financial and political crisis with paralysing effects, and the coup of 1953 against Muhammad Musaddeq, the state turned into a powerful, centralised authority surrounded by a cult of personality.⁷² Therefore, Reza Shah purged those who had been pivotal for the formation of the Iranian nation-state, and Muhammad Reza Shah (1941-1979) side-lined planners, appropriated their ideas, and found around himself uncritical statesmen, legitimising his political

⁶⁹ Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 308.

⁷⁰ Touraj Atabaki, "The First World War, Great Power Rivalries," in Touraj Atabaki (ed.), *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (London: I. B. Tauris and Co., 2006), 6.

⁷¹ *Kaveh*, No. 8 (16 August 1921), 3.

⁷² see Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy, 1941-1953* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989); and Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (California: University of California Press, 2006), 61-207.

involvement on the grounds of ‘the deficiency in the political system’.⁷³ Ultimately, both the Shahs overlooked collective efforts in favour of the glory of a nationalist dynasty. Although between 1941 and 1953 the *Majlis* and the press managed to manoeuvre more freely, the state remained politically oppressive in Kurdistan. For example, the cultural and political revival of the early 1940s ended when the army finally suppressed the experience of Mahabad in 1946, subsequently forcing a considerable number of political and cultural activists into prolonged exile, while, with the help of the landowners, the state brutally quelled the peasant uprising in the region around Bukan (1952-1953).⁷⁴ In fact, the poet Hazhar’s (Abdulrahman Sharafkandi, 1921-1991) memoirs entitled *Cheshti Mijawir* is an account of him and many others, who spent three decades in exile following the end of the Kurdish Republic of 1946.

Against this background, policies and reforms in the process of the formation of the Iranian nation-state under the Pahlavis began to alter the social and political structures of Kurdish-Iranian society. To avoid simplifying the politics of modernisation into mere adversarial attitudes towards the Kurds, one can identify at least two issues surrounding the state’s linguistic policies to demonstrate how the linguistic policies of the state derived from its linguistic requirements: first, the continuation of the drive for linguistic simplification since the early nineteenth century and the lack of a *radical* purification of Persian until well into the second Pahlavi era;⁷⁵ and secondly, the need of a modern state for new legal, economic, scientific and educational vocabularies. For example, the 1935

⁷³ Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), 220-21.

⁷⁴ Another example is Ghani Blurian (1924-2011) who was a young activist in the time of the Republic and later spent almost three decades in prison. For this see Ghani Blurian, *Alakok* (in Persian) (Tehran: Farhange Rasa, 1384 [2005]); for the peasant uprising see Amir Hassanpour, "Raparini Verzerani Mukriyan, 1331-1332," [The Peasant uprising of Mukriyan, 1952-1953], *Derwaze*, No. 1 (Apr.-May 2017).

⁷⁵ Muhammad Ali Jamalzadeh’s *Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud* (1921), a collection of short stories, was primarily a fierce criticism of using French and Arabic words not necessarily for their ‘nationality’ but for being incomprehensible.

Constitution of the First Academy (1935-1941) calls for replacing unsuitable foreign words with equivalents used among ‘the artisans [...] in poetry or in local songs’.⁷⁶ Moreover, suggested vocabularies for various professions, specifically the army but also for the sciences corresponded to institutional reforms. However, one familiar with such vocabularies will notice that a considerable number of the suggested words were never popularised nor did they ever replace the old one.⁷⁷ Undoubtedly, anti-Arabic and Turkish sentiments, as well as a pride in Persian inspired such efforts, though they divided opinions too.⁷⁸ The state banned using Kurdish as the language of education and administration but instruction and communication in Kurdish between teachers and students and also in government offices continued in spite of early encouragements to speak only Persian. However, a persistent *Kurdayeti* and, in spite of intermittent coercive measures, the absence of both a *radical* linguistic oppression and total ethnic denial in Iran, as it was the case, for example, in contemporary Turkey, helped Kurdish to flourish, embodied in continuous literary activities. Although Hassanpour’s authoritative *Language and Nationalism in Kurdistan 1918-1985* discusses linguistic policies of new modern nation-states, including Iran, a more in-depth reading of the role of language in the formation of the Iranian national identity since the end of the nineteenth century highlights a dual process of linguistic simplification and a modest, rather than a *radical*, linguistic purification until the 1970s.

In addition to oppressive linguistic policies, the politics of modernisation comprised other significant measures such as administrative division and the constant presence of

⁷⁶ Mohsen Rustayi, *Tarikhe Nokhostin Farhangestane Iran* [The History of the First Iranian Academy] (Iran: Nei Publications, 1385 [2006-7]).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 345-478.

⁷⁸ Hosain Makki, *Tarikh-E Bist Sale Ye Iran* [Twenty Years History of Iran], Vol. 6 (Tehran: Entesharat Elmi, 1374 [1995]), 235 cited in Ansari, *Politics of Nationalism*, 99.

the gendarmerie to ensure the consolidation of the central authority and the political integration of the Kurds into modern Iran— by now gendarmerie had been deprived of its constitutional functions and radically reshaped in the wake of Khyabani's and Lahuti's rebellions.⁷⁹ With no regards to ethnic rights and guided by political considerations, the constant practice of administrative division of Iran established a precedent for arbitrarily (re)division of the Kurdish region in Iran among the neighbouring provinces. Prior to the modern border, the contours of the existing and old ruling Kurdish Emirates or principalities delineated a map of Kurdistan divided among its ruling Emirates. The Kurdish region, which later became 'Iranian Kurdistan', comprised the regions under tribal confederacies such as the Shikak and the ruling Emirates of Mukrian, Ardalan and Baban. As additional centres of power, there were other ruling families in and around Kermanshah. This division of power naturally left a legacy for later administrative and electoral laws of succeeding Iranian governments since the Constitutional Revolution until Reza Khan's coup of 1921. In addition to this, geographical proximity (in the absence of effective means of communication and a weak infrastructure) and existing economic relationships, rather than the idea of modern border and identity, were behind such decisions and laws.

Administrative policies under various ruling dynasties since the early modern period had attempted to pacify the local powers and ensure the effective collection of revenue (e.g. custom and land tax) needed to maintain the court, bureaucracy and the army.⁸⁰ However, as an important break with the way administration was organised in the past, the impact of Europe on nineteenth-century Iran resulted in the expansion of bureaucracy

⁷⁹ See chapters on the role of gendarmerie and these rebellions in Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran*.

⁸⁰ S. Bakhsh, "Administration in Iran Vi. Safavid, Zand, and Qajar Periods," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/administration-vi-safavid>, accessed 13 February 2017.

under the Qajars and later the introduction of new electoral laws after the Constitutional Revolution.⁸¹ The first law concerning with administrative division was passed in this period and divided Iran into a number of *ayalats*, with their own ‘central government’, and *velayats* (sub-*ayalat* regions with an important city). Factors of *modern* border and *national* identity did not shape provincial policies, although, presumably, the Ottoman Empire and the ruling Iranian dynasties had constantly perceived Kurdish *ethnic* identity as a threat to their central authorities because of the role Kurdish ruling families could have played in imperial rivalries. Indeed, such modern factors gained ascendancy when, in the process of forming the *Iranian* nation-state in the 1920s and 1930s, Kurdish ethnic identity became inimical to the ‘national unity’ of Iran. For example, it seems that the electoral law of 1909 allocated Sauj Blagh as a constituency in the Azerbaijan province mainly because of history, electoral convenience and geographical proximity rather than political motivation.⁸² Sauj Belagh and the surrounding region had been historically in close connection with the Turkish-speaking region in its northwest stretched to Tabriz, itself an important economic, cultural, and in modern times since the early nineteenth century, also an ideological hub.

The ascendancy of political considerations that served an Iranian national unity began effectively with the rationalisation of administrative division in the process of the formation of the Iranian nation-state. Moreover, the expansion of modern bureaucracy and population increase resulted the country to be re-divided into new provinces based on new system of nomenclature more compatible with modern times. Iran’s National Council divided Iran into four *ayalats* (provinces) and twelve *velayats* (sub-provinces).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Rahim Rezazade Malek (ed.), *Engelabe Mashrooteye Iran Be Rawayate Asnade Wazarate Khareje Englis* [Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia] (Iran: Mazyar, 1377 [1998-9]), 270

The new law of December 1937 replaced the *ayalats* with ten *ostans*. This was followed by gradual changes in which Iran was finally divided into 14 provinces in 1339 [1960-1] which were recognised by names instead of numbers as it was the case under the law of 1937. Meanwhile Kurdistan Province was created in 1336 [1957-8]. Prior to this, Kurdistan, that is Sanandaj and a few other cities, and Mahabad were major cities which were allocated to the Fifth and Fourth Provinces, respectively; other minor Kurdish cities were administrated by these cities as *bakhsh* (sub-city). However, Mahabad is allocated to Western Azerbaijan to this day and Kurdistan Province does not represent the region dominantly populated by the Kurds in the west of Iran either. Modern administrative divisions defied notions of Kurdish ethnic and geographical unity and served ‘national unity’ of Iran. The rationalisation of Iran’s administrative divisions began no later than the Radical Party’s manifesto of 1923 under Ali Akbar Davar.⁸³ This was the first step to reform the administration according to the exigencies of a modern state. However, although there are only little studies on this subject, they show that administrative divisions throughout the twentieth century have been mainly arbitrary, economically and politically unproductive, and failed to serve decentralisation, while ignoring, for example, the connection between local identity and geography (see Figure 4).⁸⁴ In later decades, and with the emergence of a more organised *Kurdayeti*, administrative divisions explicitly became a political act to safeguard the central authority against potential Kurdish political movements. Moreover, from the outset, some intellectuals believed that administrative division should serve the same purpose as uniformity in ‘language, moral, [and] dress’

⁸³ ‘Intelligent report amended provincial administrative division’, FO 371 21895 E672/167/34, dated 15 January 1938, quoted in Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran: The Pahlavi and After*, 2nd ed. (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 56. Ali Akbar Davar (1885-1937), minister of justice in 1927, was the founder of modern Persian judicial system.

⁸⁴ See Bahador ‘Alami, *Naqd Wa Arziyabie Qanoon Taqsimat Keshwarie Iran* [A Study of Iran’s Administrative Divisions Law] (Tehran: Iran Parliament’s Research Centre, 2013).

did to achieve 'national unity', and asked to avoid the existing ethnic names of the provinces too (see below).⁸⁵

Consequently, 'Kurdistan province' began to comprise smaller number of Kurdish cities and population under successive governments (see Figure 4). Guided 'mainly by security considerations', the modern state aimed to interrupt linguistic and ethnic commonalities between the Kurds inside Iran and the Kurdish residents of adjacent countries, and in this way diminish the impact of 'external' political movements.⁸⁶ Although this politically motivated policy never resulted in ethnic assimilation of annexed cities and regions into other provinces nor was it successful in diminishing Kurdish identity, it created a condition to deny individuals the right to prosper because of their ethnicity and ingrained prejudices. As crucially, it continued to conceal the sufferings of social and religious groups, such as the Faili Kurds, who geographically found themselves in the margins of Kurdistan.⁸⁷ Therefore, the history of the administrative division of Iran is also a history of denying millions of Kurds opportunities to prosper socially and economically. As significant, it also created conditions prone to ethnic animosity in the time of political crisis among, for example, the historically mixed communities of the Kurds and Azaris in the north and Faili Kurds and others in Ilam in the south. The administrative division of Iran corresponded to the need of a modern state in modern time and the White Revolution was the heir to such policies and their outcomes.

⁸⁵ Mahmud Afshar, *Ayandeh*, 1925, No. 1.

⁸⁶ Hamed Nohekhan, "Administrative Divisions under the Pahlavi," University of Shahid Beheshti at <http://www.ensani.ir/storage/Files/20140616144106-9945-24.pdf>, accessed 23 July 2016.

⁸⁷ The Faili Shi'a Kurds have suffered in both Iran and Iraq. They faced constant banishment and forced settlements by the Ba'th regime in Iraq in the 1970s. The administrative division of Iran complicated life for the Failis by ignoring their religious and ethnic identities. Studies on the Failis are rare. However, for a background reading of the Faili Kurds in modern Iraq see *State and Society in Iran*; and on the Faili Kurds in Iran see Jamil Rahmani, "Motale'eye Kaifie Mazhab Wa Qomgaraiy Dar Mian Kordhaye Shi'e," [A Qualitative Study of Religion and Ethnicity Among Shia Kurds], [in Persian], *Jame'eshenasi [Sociology]* (2015).

4. Administrative Division of Iran 1908-1979

Administrative Divisions of Iran 1908-1979		
YEAR	PROVINCES (OSTANS)	
1908	4	Azerbaijan, Fars, Khorasan, Kerman
31 December 1937	10	(The 4 th Ostan: Khuiy, Rezayie, Mahabad, Maragheh, Bijar The 5 th Ostan: Ilam, Shahabad, Kermanshah, Sanandaj, Melayar, Hamadan)
1957-8 [1336]		Kurdistan Province is created by excluding many Kurdish cities
1960-61 [1339]	14	Numbers are replaced by names
1979	24	The Kurdish region in the west of Iran continues to be divided between different provinces, including Kurdistan Province

5. The Province of Azerbaijan Gharbi



The province of Azerbaijan Gharbi (West Azerbaijan) includes Kurdish cities south, west and north of Lake Urumia (English words added).

Source: The official website of West Azerbaijan, at <http://ostan-ag.gov.ir/FaramandariMaps>, accessed 03 March 2017.

6. The Province of Kurdistan



The province of Kurdistan (English words added).

Source: The official website of Kurdistan province, at <http://www.tamin.ir/news/9593.html>, accessed 03 March 2017.

7. The Province of Kermanshah



The province of Kermanshah includes a number of Kurdish cities, including Paveh, Kermanshah and Ilam (English words added).

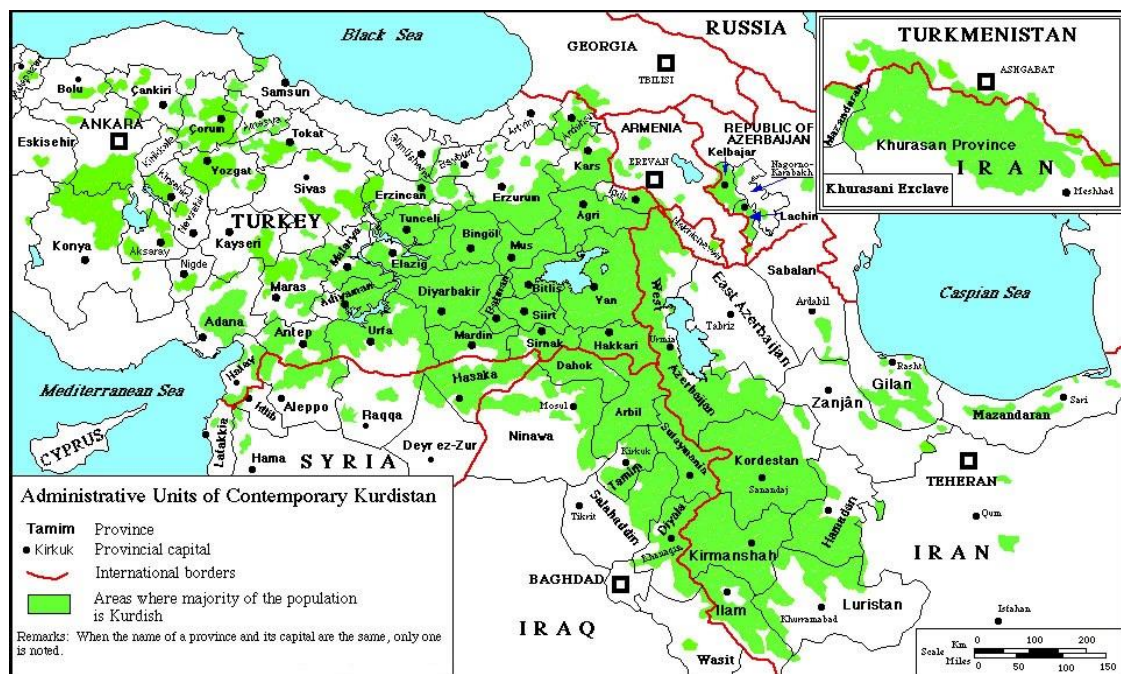
Source: Tourism Iran, at <https://tourismiran.blog.ir/>, accessed 03 March 2017.

8. The region populated by the Kurds in the west of Iran



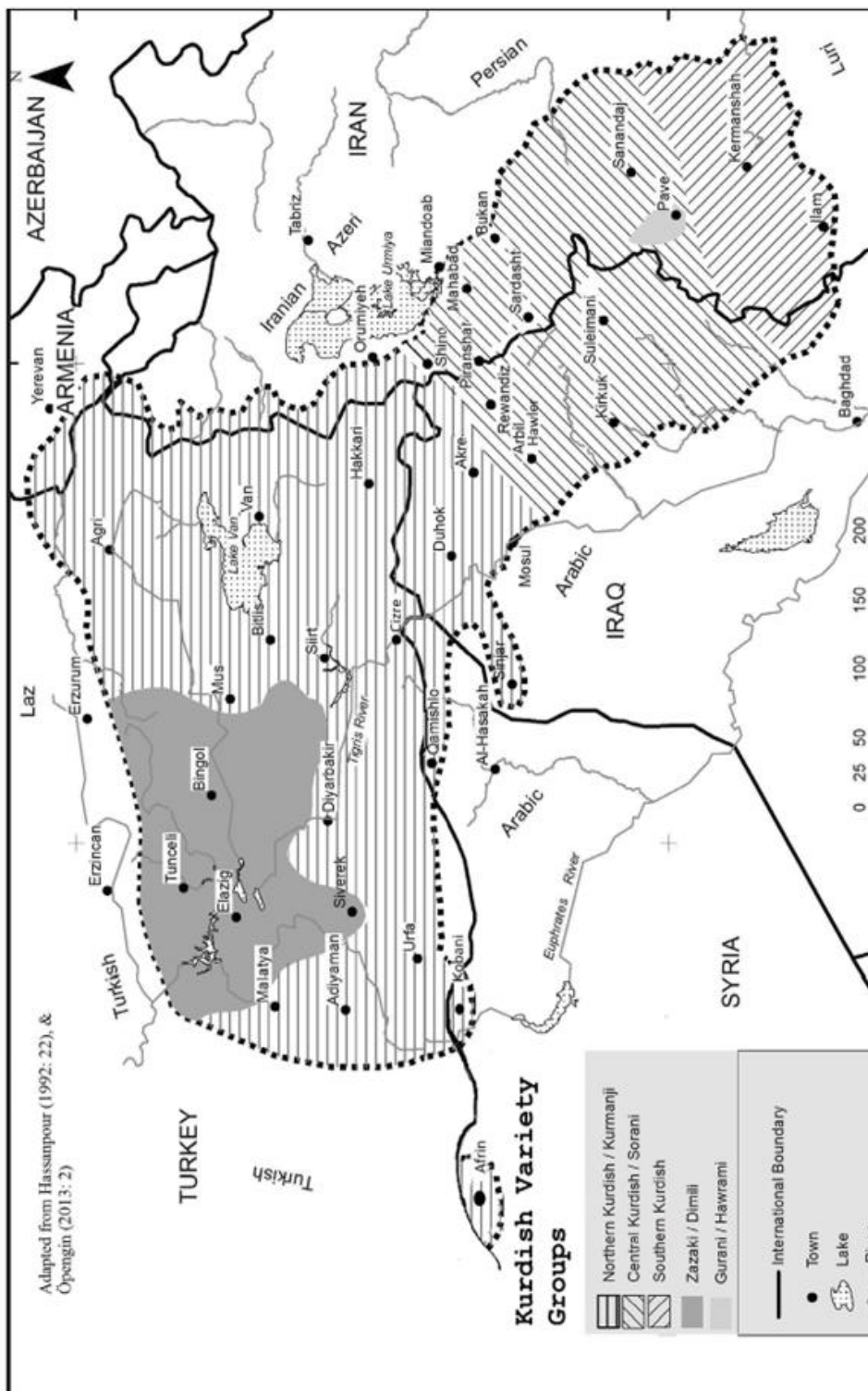
Areas in green show the region populated by the Kurds in the west of Iran. Inner borders indicate that the region is administered under different provincial centres (■). Cultural and linguistic borders become thicker as they meet the regions populated by Turkish speaking people in north and northeast, and by Persian speaking people in south and southeast.

This map is a modified part of the map below.



Source: Institut Kurd De Paris, at http://www.institutkurde.org/en/kurdorama/map_of_kurdistan.php (accessed 03 March 2017).

9. The linguistic map of the Kurdish region in Iran and in other neighbouring countries



Sources: Jaffer Sheyholislami, “Language Varieties of the Kurds” in Wolfgang Taucher et al. (ed.), *The Kurds: History - Religion - Language – Politics* (Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2015).

The modern Iranian government undertook unprecedented social, institutional and economic reforms between 1925 and 1941. This marked the start of deliberate, centrally directed development in Iran. As Jahangir Amuzegar has noted, these reforms were ‘the outcome of a philosophy and a policy, rather than of a concrete program or strategy’.⁸⁸ Although these reforms did not entail profound alteration of the social structure of Kurdish society, they were significant because they (1) laid the foundation of new institutions into that society, reshaping its social and political structure and (2) maintained the tendency to socio-economic integration. The pace and scope of many aspects of such reforms as, for example, the spread of modern schools, healthcare, infrastructural development and the provision of modern facilities to ameliorate living conditions remained limited. Moreover, the chasm between village and city persisted as the latter began to benefit from reforms and feel the impact of social and technological transformation too; the prevalent *agha-jutiar* (landowner-peasant) relationship survived and continued to characterise an agricultural, rural Kurdish society. Moreover, the Second World War and the political developments that followed Reza Shah’s rule, at best interrupted both a sluggish state-led modernisation and the amelioration of living conditions in Kurdistan. In fact, economic conditions in Kurdistan under Reza Shah deteriorated and his rule did not entail any profound alteration in the social order of society with respect to social stratification, gender relations, living conditions, healthcare, communications and transportation.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Jahangir Amuzegar, "Capital Formation and Development Finance," in Ehasan Yarshater (ed.), *Iran Faces the Seventies* (England: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 67.

⁸⁹ On famine and poverty in Kurdistan in this period see Karim Hesami, *Le Bireweriekanim* [From My Memoirs], 4 vols. (Uppsala: Jina Nu Forlaget, 1986); and Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir* [A Mosque Servant's Stew] (Iraq: Kitebi Mehregan, 2007).

Insofar as the state was concerned, two main factors were responsible for these unimpressive results. First, the state was present as a political and coercive power rather than a socially modernising and inclusive authority. Secondly, as scholars have noted, the economic objectives of Reza Shah comprised rapid industrialisation and infrastructural development, which mostly benefited the centre, tended to fulfil the state's military requirements, and served to produce a modern, progressive and independent image of Iran.⁹⁰ For example, economic development plans ignored agriculture and contained an ambitious, extravagant but uneconomical railway system from the Persian Gulf in the South to the Caspian Sea in the North. The cost fell on people while oil reserves could have been used to provide foreign loans.⁹¹ Moreover, the economic plans did not effectively deal with geographical hurdles (vast arable lands, lack of rivers and roads), though one can infer that such a hostile environment in addition to Iran's fragile infrastructure were serious hurdles to overcome by any government in favour of agriculture. Therefore, the orientation of the economic plans and the neglect of agriculture disadvantaged a periphery region like Kurdistan, which relied on agriculture and had a fragile infrastructure. Moreover, Kurdistan continued to suffer under the centralising tendency of the modernisation whose second development plan (1956-1962) effectively marked the triumph of centralisation in its tension with decentralisation or more province-oriented plans.

Reports and books on the general socio-economic condition across Iran make amends for the lack of statistics on Kurdistan under Reza Shah. Although this period witnessed

⁹⁰ For more on economic objectives of Reza Shah see Kamran Mofid, *Development Planning in Iran: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (England: MENS Press, 1987), 7-33; and for a brief account of economic development under Reza Shah see M. E. Yapp, *The near East since the First World War: A History to 1995* (London: Longman, 1996), 177-8.

⁹¹ Yapp, Yapp, *The near East*, 177. For more on economic policies of Reza Shah and the neglect of agriculture see Kamran Mofid, *Development Planning in Iran*, 19.

an increase in the state's influence and size in economy, comprehensive economic plans were only introduced after the Second World War. Indeed, the role of the state in economy prior to 1921 was confined to granting concessions to foreigners in order to stimulate the use of natural resources. Nevertheless, based on unequal terms, these agreements to a great extent formed the basis for later economic development and finance for example in oil industry, telegraph, bank, and railways.⁹² Until the end of the 1960s, the lack of revenue was one of the main reasons which continued to paralyse economic plans and delay their effective executions. As a positive aspect, however, this period witnessed the coming of age of a generation of Iranian political leaders and activists who initiated important principles of later reforms including the White Revolution. Furthermore, in addition to the existing literates, an emerging urbanised educated generation in Kurdish society compensated for the deficiencies of the state in a number of significant ways by actively engaging in social and political activities, which included the spread of literacy and the promulgation of social, political, gender, and ethnic awareness. This was especially the case between 1939 and 1946 (see below). Meanwhile, socio-economic plans began to assume two common characteristics: they were confined to the centre and ignorant of agriculture, which in the 1930s employed up to 85 percent of the labour force. Moreover, in spite of expansion in transport and communication, contemporary observers' accounts confirm ineffective role of the state in rural areas and provinces.⁹³

Therefore, as a mainly rural and agricultural society, the Kurdish region suffered from the orientation and deficiencies of economic policies in this period. General observations of the Iranian economy in this period as well as the writings of contemporary Kurdish

⁹² Julian Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 84. For more on the role of the Iranian state in economy see *ibid.*, 87.

⁹³ Mallispaugh in *ibid.*

literary figures attest to the fact that by neglecting agriculture and prioritising political objectives, socio-economic conditions in Kurdistan did not improve; in fact, for most people it even deteriorated:

In the time of Reza Shah, the economy was in a very bad state. In addition to the oppression of the gendarmerie, unemployment and poverty in villages increased economic burden. Peasants used oxen to plough the land. The most profitable crop was tobacco. A family of eight had to work long hours. However, in the end either the crop was damaged by humidity or swallowed by the Tobacco Collection Centre. The remaining was in the mercy of the landowner.⁹⁴

The abovementioned political and geographical restrictions and the impact of the Great War generated little hope for immediate economic prosperity. Moreover, Kurdish society carried the scars of the War for many years, paralysed further by famine, cold and hunger, and the quest of powerful tribes such as the Shikak for political power over other tribes also increased the casualties of wars and conflicts. At the same time, Kurdistan's economic structure and its class relations perpetuated economic hardship and social miseries for many. The society was mainly characterised by an unequal and oppressive regime of the Kurdish *agha* (landowner class), which ensured the *agha's* ownership of the land and the exploitation of the peasant. When the ownership of a village was transferred from one landowner to another, it included peasants' families as well. This social relationship differed from a slave-based economy in that the peasant shared a small portion of the harvest. *Agha* could expel a peasant not only from his village but also from the region under his jurisdiction. In addition to poverty, this forced many peasants and

⁹⁴ Hesami, *Le Bireweriekanim*, 83.

their families to be constantly on the move.⁹⁵ On the other hand, agriculture and agricultural techniques in this period in Kurdistan did not improve, while the production of grain across Iran decreased towards the end of Reza Shah's reign in 1941 with the effect that the government was forced to import wheat.⁹⁶ The situation was exacerbated by the increase in the population of Iran from 10 million in 1925 to almost 15 million in 1941. The 1934 budget allocated 42.2% to war while the share of agriculture and public health was 0.4% and 2.3% respectively.⁹⁷

Furthermore, observers in the 1940s reported that,

Agricultural labour force and their living conditions were very poor and for the most part illiterate. Public-health services were almost completely lacking, and clothing and fuel were scanty and hard to come by. The peasants were often in ill health, suffering from malnutrition, malaria, dysentery, typhoid, typhus and cholera'.⁹⁸

G. Black also observed in 1948 that 'the ground [was] ploughed by oxen dragging a crooked stick, [...] The grain [was] cut with stickle and threshed upon clay threshing floors by beaters pulled in a circle by oxen. The grain is separated by winnowing'.⁹⁹ Confirmed by many contemporaries such as Hemin and Hussami, such living conditions and agricultural techniques aptly applied to Kurdish rural and village communities. Therefore, as the result of neglecting agriculture and prioritising political objectives, Kurdistan did not considerably benefit from economic policies under Reza Shah while political oppression and the constant presence of gendarmerie remained striking aspects

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Mofid, *Development Planning in Iran*, 8.

⁹⁷ Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 65-66.

⁹⁸ Mofid, *Development Planning in Iran*, 8.

⁹⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*

of his rule. However, this period is distinguished for its significant contribution to social change through the foundation of modern institutions such as schools and healthcare, the introduction of new means of transportation, and the rationalisation of administration. Such institutional and technological changes provided the base for a more profound transformation of the society during the era of the White Revolution.

SOCIAL CHANGE, 1920-1960

Until the 1960s, the socio-economic change in Kurdistan was a sluggish and prolonged one. However, the emergence of a number of modern institutions and trends marked the beginning of a new era. The state, whose policies corresponded to the need of a modern state, was the main contributor in this process except where non-state agents of change were crucial, for example, for simultaneously spreading literacy and promulgating social awareness. These revealed the interaction of various factors in reshaping a society.

In addition to the gradual spread of modern education and healthcare, the new era was going to be characterised by the emergence of wage labour, including seasonal workers, and the formation of an urbanised middle class which accompanied urbanisation with its impact on Kurdish urban centres, the transformation of cultural values and norms, and technological changes. As regards social stratification, an urbanised middle-class only emerged towards the 1960s. In rural areas, an abject lack of a health system and public education continued to characterise life in both rural and urban centres. In the 1930s and 1940s, modern education had not become widespread and a weak infrastructure prevented it from reaching rural areas. However, adding the itinerant literates to this category, this period marked the emergence of an educated, urbanised generation who reflected modernisation and modern education. Their impact alongside the *hojra* educated on

political developments, for example, by founding societies and publishing *Nishtiman* (Ku. Homeland) and *Kurdistan* which either preceded or coincided with the Kurdish Republic of 1946.

Modern urbanisation did not radically begin in Kurdish cities until after land reform in the 1960s which entailed an exodus to cities. A Kurdish city was mainly characterised by a military base, a *Bazaar* (market) in a mercantile economy based on agriculture, and *mahallas* (neighbourhoods) which evolved around the main congregational mosque and the *Bazaar*, the main components of an unindustrialised self-sufficient economy.¹⁰⁰ Towns had two important components: *caravansaries* that constituted the focal point of overland trade and commerce; and *mahalla*, the physical borders and gates of which, in spite of psychological bounds of its residents, were eroding away. However, a Kurdish city or town was not merely typified by a 'traditional', implying immobile, way of life. Prior to the vast migration of the 1960s and 1970s, people moved between villages or resided in cities as the result of a number of push factors such as the oppression of *aghas* and poverty, as well as pull factors, including the existence of free, i.e. not owned by *aghas*, and culturally attractive cities. Industry was mainly limited to craftsmen but also craftswomen. Women worked in agriculture, animal husbandry and carpet weaving, in addition to demanding household tasks. Although the conspicuous absence of adequate research related to gender studies characterises Kurdish studies, circumstantial evidence and public knowledge refer to a history of the hardship women endured as unrecognised labourers in the carpet weaving, in agriculture and in the production of dairy for cities.

¹⁰⁰ For pre-modernisation cities and modern urbanisation in Iran see Eckart Ehlers, "Modern Urbanization and Modernization in Persia," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/cities-iv>, accessed 16 July 2016.

Finally, whereas one of the main characteristics of the Kurdish region was the village-city discrepancy, it was shockingly maintained, including in the era of the White Revolution, despite institutional, economic and infrastructural changes. As noted above, a profound change of this aspect of life or more precisely a radical alteration of social life in the rural area, depended upon the main contributor's, i.e. the state's, socio-economic, cultural and political policies. It did not imply that life in cities was more prosperous but that villages could not benefit from reforms also due to an inadequate transportation and communications system. The Pahlavi modernisation maintained the tendency to ignore rural areas, whereas in this period the majority of Kurdish population lived in countryside without sufficient access to modern facilities, such as education, health, and communications. On the other hand, each Kurdish town was surrounded by a great number of villages in which *agha* ruled and the state was effectively absent for the provision of economic, social and educational needs. Instead, it insured its physical presence through growing gendarmerie bases.

Healthcare

As Byron Good argues, studies on the history of the healthcare in Iran tend to link the transformation of healthcare to economic, political and social transformations rather than the diffusion of Western medical knowledge.¹⁰¹ The centralisation of power under Reza Shah marked both the beginning of the centralisation of healthcare system, including the institutionalisation of the imperialist legacy of Quarantine services and the control of hospitals. This included the transformation of the Constitutional Sanitary Council into a

¹⁰¹ Byron J. Good, "The Transformation of Health Care in Modern Iranian History," in Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie (eds), *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (USA: State University of New York Press, 1981).

Department of Public Health and the introduction of new services such as vaccination, provincial medical offices and licensing regulations.¹⁰² The impact of this on the Kurdish society of the time is reflected in including a Ministry of Health in the ministries of the autonomous Kurdistan Republic, attesting to the growing awareness of the population to public health.¹⁰³ This awareness, however, did not necessarily confirm the existence of any effective health system. For example, in 1925 the Iranian government's director of Public Health, Dr. Amir Alam, stated that,

For the last two years the general sanitary situation of the country has left much to be desired. Provincial Medical Officers of Health, having failed to receive for several months their salaries, have for the most part abandoned their posts. An indifference, a *laissez aller*, truly regrettable reigns with regard to all questions of public health. Our plans, our schemes, our cries, have had no chance of finding an echo in governmental or parliamentary circles.¹⁰⁴

The modes of practice included *hakims* (an unqualified 'doctor', apothecary), bazaar shops, which provided herbal medicine, curator prayers, pray writers, fracture healers, and visiting sacred shrines. Also crucial were holy places and celebrated *Sheikhs* whose religious prestige and genealogy provided unmatched authority. Historical medical knowledge and books guided practitioners while religious beliefs allowed many such forms to continue to exist. It seems that the role of missionary doctors was restricted by the influence of religion with which *hakims* or healers were closely connected.¹⁰⁵ The connection of religious figures and medicine (advanced chemical or herbal), to benefit from Gramsci's insight on the role of the intellectuals in society, reveals how *Sheikhs*

¹⁰² Ibid., 69.

¹⁰³ Kakshar Oremar, *Interview with Mina Qazi* (in Kurdish) (Sulaimaniya: Karo, 2013), 35.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Good, "The Transformation of Health Care", 70.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, V. 2.

were seen as healers and *hakims* as possessing divine power.¹⁰⁶ In the same way as it is noted in studies on the history of healthcare in Iran, the structure of healthcare can be characterised as decentralised, relatively self-sustaining and autonomous from central powers.¹⁰⁷ This structure corresponded to the political and economic structure of a society that was politically ruled by powerful tribal chiefs, and economically was characterised as dominantly self-sufficient and geographically restricted. The absence of both transportation networks and an effective communications system isolated village and town communities from not only each other but also from major urban centres. Modernisation and socio-economic transformation were going to cause structural change in this respect, too, with the effect that modern medical institutions gradually replaced known modes of medical practices.

However, the introduction of modern healthcare in Kurdistan was slow and ineffective, while illiteracy, the lack of facilities and cadres hindered its expansion. Although the 1930s witnessed licensing regulations, the requirement of diploma for physicians, the establishment of a Ministry of Health with provincial offices, there is no indication to any health programme in Kurdistan in this period. Moreover, as noted in the study of other regions, the provision of healthcare prioritised the requirements of the military and ‘reflected the basic interests of Reza Shah and the elite’.¹⁰⁸ Sir Harry Sinderson confirmed in 1935 that ‘in this [medical programme] the civil population was regarded as secondary in importance to the army’.¹⁰⁹ The first hospital in the provincial city of Sanandaj was ‘a military hospital, the construction of which between 1927 and

¹⁰⁶ Hoare and Smith, *Prison Notebooks*, 137-38.

¹⁰⁷ Good, "The Transformation of Health Care", 63.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*

1931 was concurrent with the establishment of a *padegan* (army base).¹¹⁰ Events surrounding the establishment of this hospital demonstrated the slow progress of healthcare. After its destruction as the result of a fire in 1321 [1942-43], it was only reopened in 1340 [1961].¹¹¹ *Rega*, published by the remnants of the fallen Republic in exile, provided further evidence of the prioritisation of the military and the unavailability of modern healthcare for the population. In its first and the only issue published in autumn 1949, *Rega* reported

Red Lion and Sun Society has been taken over by the *Tip* (army brigade) in Mahabad and it accepts only people close to itself. [The Society] has opened a branch for the population merely to pretend that it serves people. Across Kurdistan, in Bukan, Saqqez, Baneh, Sardasht and Naghadeh, as well as in villages, there are no doctors nor are there any medicine available.¹¹²

Instead of more adequate institutions of healthcare, Kurdish cities in the 1950s and 1960s embraced *Tazriqat va Panseman* (Injection and Bandage) which were set up by, for example, previous army medics with preliminary medical knowledge; pharmacies run by graduated doctors are phenomena of the 1970s. (According to official statistics for 1352 [1973] by administrative divisions, there were 26 dependant and independent pharmacies in Kurdistan province).¹¹³ Therefore, Kurdistan in this period continued to be characterised by the absence of an effective health system and its requirements, including

¹¹⁰ Borhan Ayazi, *Ayyine-Ye Sanandaj* [The Mirror of Sanandaj] (Iran: Payam, 1991), 24.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² in Ali Karimi, *Zhiyan W Basarhati Abdolraham Zabihi* [The Life and Fortune of Abdolrahman Zabihi] (Sweden: Zagros Media, 1999), 633.

¹¹³ Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]* (Iran: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1975), 108.

trained personnel. Geography, however, was not the only hurdle to the expansion of modern healthcare. The tendency of the state-led modernisation to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation left out vast, disconnected rural areas and further delayed the promotion of social consciousness and the provision of healthcare and sanitation.

Crucially, a significant aspect of social change was attempts to raise awareness on such issues, which were carried out by non-state agents of change who were influenced by humanitarian and social ideas of the time. Receptivity to progressive ideas of the time influenced social activists across Iran. For example, in the early years of the Iranian nation-state *Alam-e Naswan* (the World of Women), one of the earliest periodicals published by and for women, 'concentrated on such matters as health and hygiene, care of children, domestic science, cookery, dress, and fashion'.¹¹⁴ This paper, which 'was enthusiastic and hopeful about reforms for women carried out by the state' faced the fate of many other journals and was ironically shut down by Reza Shah in 1934 as he 'consolidated more power and authority'.¹¹⁵

In Kurdistan too, war and political upheavals quickly caused profound change in attitudes and actions. They inspired cultural revivals in the forms of literary activities and publications, which drew attentions to social conditions too. *Nishtiman* and *Kurdistan* promoted awareness of social issues in the early 1940s. However, the forceful end of the political experiences which allowed their publications interrupted activities that aimed to ameliorate living conditions. Finally, complementary to these efforts was the state's contribution to the promulgation of social awareness of health issues since the 1920s by

¹¹⁴ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "Alam-E Nesvan," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/alam-e-nesvan-a-magazine-founded-in-mizan-1299-s>, accessed 23 August 2016.

¹¹⁵ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, "Expanding Agendas for the 'New' Iranian Woman," in Stephanie Cronin (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Reza Shah, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge, 2003), 158.

introducing plans to form provincial medical centres and ministries. These efforts remained limited in scope and did not entail profound change. However, the ideas remained and laid the foundation for later attempts to establish a more effective health system. Consequently, the Kurdish society gradually began to receive new ideas and practices in healthcare.

Literacy and modern education in Kurdistan

In the second decade of the twentieth century, the famous journal *Kaveh* regarded illiteracy in Iran as *om ol-ma'ayeb* or the mother of all faults.¹¹⁶ Literacy was restricted to main urban centres; historically it was a luxury of wealthy families, a prerogative accorded to people, including a percentage of women with a wealthy background, in the upper echelons of society. Before the advent of state schools, mosques and other worshipping places were centres of learning. Religious establishment under the Safavids and Qajars maintained the role of providing literacy and religious education until modern *madrasas* in Iran overtook traditional educational centres, which saw their demise as a consequence of socioeconomic transformation of Iran in the end of the 1960s and 1970s.

In Kurdistan *maktab* and *hojra* were attached to the mosque, and *khanaqa* was a centre for the upkeep of *tariqa* (a non-orthodox religious sect) and a place where *Tasawwuf* or Sufism was studied. *Khanaqa* belonged to a sheikh who taught his followers by employing *mullahs* in the *khanaqa*'s own *hojra*. For example, the *sheikhs* of Borhan and Zanbil in the vicinity of Bukan ran *khanaqas* to where many notable families sent their sons for religious education. *Faqeh* was a religious student who learned under a

¹¹⁶ Hassan Taqizadeh, "Nokat Wa Molahezat," [Points and Observations], *Kaveh* 5, No. 11 (1299 [1920]), 1.

mullah in the mosque's or *khanaqa*'s *hojra*. According to Hemin, who himself spent four years in a *khanaqa*, the diversity was remarkable:

In those years *khanaqa* was densely populated. People could freely visit *khanaqa*. The disparity between its inhabitants was negligible [...] it was like Noah's Ark. There were people from different ethnicities. Wanderers, socially isolated, worshippers, Muslim, *mullah*, Sayyed, learned, educated, robber, thief, illiterate, crazy, idle, disabled, blind, limping and even atheist all lived together under the same roof. Afghanis, Persians, Turks, Azeris and even Indians could be seen there. [There were] Kurds with their own dialects from different parts of Kurdistan. Men who later became well-known such as Fauzi, Saifi Qazi, Peshawa Qazi Muhammad [the head of the Kurdistan Republic of 1946], haji *mullah* Muhammad Sharafkandi, 'Ali khan Amiri, and especially the literate aghas of Faizulabegi visited *khanaqa* and stayed for several months.¹¹⁷

However, the mosque's *hojra* embraced more men from the lower strata of society with the effect that those from poor families constituted the majority of *faqehs*. According to Hazhar:

The majority of *faqehs* are [either] the sons of widows [or] poor peasants. Once in *hojra*, they have to beg for bread and provide clothing from *ratura* [bursary]. In springs and autumns, they have to travel to villages to beg for cooking oil, cheese, tobacco, tea and sugar. People paid *faqehs zakat* [alms] by setting aside proportions from the harvest.¹¹⁸

Away from home, they used the mosques' resources for the duration of their religious learning; and the landowners' financial support was crucial for the maintenance of

¹¹⁷Mukriyani, *Tarik W Run*. For more on religious education in Kurdistan see Mardūk, "The Madrasa in Sunni Kurdistan".

¹¹⁸Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*, 28.

hojras. Free meal and accommodation were provided albeit at the expense of village inhabitants. An attendant of *hojra* around Bukan in the second Pahlavi era downgrades the role of *khanaqas*, which was mainly ‘a place for rich and notables’, in spreading literacy and science and in improving living conditions as long as a wider population is concerned. However, in spite of economic hardships endured by *faqehs* and the existing curriculum, religious schools were crucial for literacy as available centres of education. As regards both subjects and teaching methods, their deficiencies were illuminated by the spread of modern education. Hazhar complains,

How is their [*faqehs*] education? [It consists of] a number of age-old books which have changed a little. I mean the curriculum has not changed for centuries. Teaching is only the responsibility of those who have learnt from such books [...] The educational discipline and quarterly or annual exams are unheard of.¹¹⁹

As a starting point for acquiring literacy and also a variety of scientific and religious knowledge, a mosque’s *hojra* played similar role in other regions of Kurdistan such as Marivan where it was supported by landowners and *vaqfs* (religious endowment). Therefore, benefiting from the residency of a landowner family, many villages came to possess *hojra* as a centre of literacy. In many villages the mosque provided both religious and some form of scientific education for around twenty students in the first decades of the twentieth century. After a few years these students were qualified as *mala* and received a certificate to be able to carry out religious duties in a village.

Furthermore, in a village a landowner’s resources were crucial for providing funds and shelter for recruited *mullahs*. The literates became bound to a system of patronage at the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

same time and this explains, for example, a close relationship of many poets with the landowner class in spite of their criticism of the *agha-jutiar* economic system which also guaranteed the economic and political power of the landowner over the village.¹²⁰ In a mass immigration of *mullahs* of Baneh to Mariwan amid the harsh conditions of the Second World War, the *aghas* of this region embraced and provided them with both accommodation and religious status in various villages. The *agha* class apparently sought to continue its legitimacy in the eyes of the population by maintaining its link to religion.

The Qajar Empire (1798-1925) is recognised as an era when mosques and subsequently *khanaqas* spread across Kurdistan with the effect that it increased interest in literacy. In this respect, we should recognise the importance of religious centres of education and also the accidental nature of acquiring literacy by individuals. Religious education centres produced literate individuals who later, in various capacities, spread literacy across the region. As stated above, the lives of many such literate individuals and poets illustrate how the interest in acquiring literacy and knowledge was promoted especially where the state was effectively absent. Qane‘ is probably the quintessential example by illustrating how the life and activity of a literate person can simultaneously popularise the importance of education and promulgate social and political awareness. Despite economic hardship, he became an active person whose travel and literary activities, made literacy a popular goal among the lower strata of the society.¹²¹ Crucially, the Great War and the October Revolution of 1917 were the cataclysm which caused reorientation in social outlooks. With later political upheavals, such events ended the

¹²⁰ See the life and poems of Qane‘, known as ‘the poet of the exploited’ in Borhan Qane‘ (ed.), *Divani Qane‘* [An Anthology of Qane’s Poetry] (Iran: Dalaho Publications, 1393 [2014-15])

¹²¹ See *ibid.*

isolation of Kurdish society and opened it to change and new ideas. In one of his poems, Qane' warns the landowner class:

*Listen! Socialism has become widespread
Is ever closer your end.
Your servants have realised
you are their enemies
Your fort is not formidable or unconquerable
Because its walls are made of colonialism.*

And in another message to the masses, he demands:

*Arm yourself with guns, shuffles and pens
You, from the enlightened to shepherds.
Let's demolish this rotten order
Let's build the equality palace.
Then the son of the Kurdish proletariat
Will lead their homeland, Kurdistan.*¹²²

As regards the accidental nature of becoming literate, a number of factors, such as family ties, location and a relative's attitude to life, were decisive in putting one on the path of acquiring literacy and obtaining available religious and scientific education. This applies to Qane', Hemin, Hazhar and many others who testify to this fact in their memoirs.¹²³ As another example, Karim Hussami (1926-2001), writer and political activist, became literate because of his father and another *mirza* who were both in the service of the *agahs* of Qizilja in the Mahabad region. After becoming fluent in Persian, Hussami attracted the

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ As 'the son of a refugee who had rebelled against the landowner class', Qane' was lucky to have a relative who became his guardian after his father died and enrolled him in a *Hojra* around Marivan. See *ibid.*, 3.; Hazhar's acquisition of education was also accidental. See Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*, 13.

attention of a family acquaintance, a landowner of a remote village, with the effect that he became his *mirza* and also the teacher of his sons.¹²⁴

10. Qane'.



‘The pedagogy of the oppressed’. Qane’ at his best, ca. 1950.

Source: <http://www.kurdipedia.org/folderviewer.aspx?lng=7&id=20081215133936730>, accessed 04/04/2017.

As a result of acquiring education through religious schools and by accident, literacy spread in circumstances influenced little by the state. Such a generation, exemplified by the likes of the abovementioned poets, established themselves as the enlightened of twentieth-century modernising Iranian Kurdistan. In addition to nationalist ideas, they carried a mixture of socialist ideas (except in the case of Hazhar) with the effect that when the illiterate masses learned their poems it simultaneously increased the will for the acquisition of knowledge. Poetry was probably the most attractive literary form for many reasons. Widespread illiteracy was not a barrier for its learning but was more accessible because listening to or encouraging short poems was easier than reading books. Furthermore, poetry was creative and most importantly a reliable source in which ‘truth’ could be cited. Such factors around poetry probably explained why the majority of the learned men in this time became poets or acquired poetic skills, imitated their

¹²⁴ Hesami, *Le Bireweriekanim*, 18-23.

predecessors and conveyed the ideas of the time. Modern education could not conceal the history of literacy which provided conditions and agency for new education.

Modern education and non-state agents of change

Modern education in Iran formally began with the establishment of primary and then secondary schools in towns as the result of pre- and post-Constitutional reforms, which had been inspired by the idea of modern education. Upon contact with modernity, a 'progressive' and 'scientific' perception of education began to guide contemporary intellectuals.¹²⁵ This view originated in the Enlightenment and also, as scholars have noted, in the Whig perception of history as progress, influential in the Victorian Britain.¹²⁶ Kurdish intellectuals were attracted to this conception for two primary reasons: first, illiteracy was perceived as a social ill; and, second, modern education was regarded as a means to elevate Kurds to the level of a (progressive) 'nation'. The transformation of Kurdish poetry into a social discourse in the end of the nineteenth century, was intellectually guided by modern concepts of nation and education,¹²⁷ while modern Kurdish journalism and historiography vividly began to reflect the progressive conception of modern education.

There were attempts at establishing modern schools in Kurdish urban centres in the end of the Constitutional era; and like the religious education, state education mostly

¹²⁵ For a history of education in Iran see Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, Ch. 3; Ahmad Ashraf, "General Survey of Modern Education," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/education-vii-general-survey-of-modern-education>, accessed 02 August 2016.; David Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992). On the Ottoman Empire see Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernisation of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 283-84; and M. Sukru Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹²⁶ Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5-6.

¹²⁷ Cf. Koyi's poetry in Koyi, *Diwan*, 61; and Piramerd's memoir in Omed Ashna, *Piramerd*, Vol. 1 (Hawler: Aras, 2001).

benefited the male population. Educational efforts incited the reaction of some religious schools and figures when towns and cities such as Mahabad, Sanandaj and Saqqez began to acquire public primary schools in the 1920s.¹²⁸ Memoirs and biographies indicate the emergence of secondary schools much later. For example, in 1938 a male student from Mahabad, where an education department seems to have existed in these years, had to go to Urumia to finish his secondary education.¹²⁹

The intrusion of modern ideas into the existing culture elicited the resistance of the religious institution, and the prevalent anti-modern education attitudes hindered the spread of modern schools. Moreover, in spite of the existence of '*motajadded*' (Pe. modernised) religious persons, the pressure of religious beliefs was constant. The era of the coexistence of religion and science in the education system of *hojra* had gone. Modern natural sciences and modern schools began to threaten the position of the clergy and also the validity of the religious texts.

In 1927, I finished my primary school in Mahabad. The situation was strange then. Non-religious education [was regarded] as wrong and a person who tried to enrol in a secondary school was seen as an infidel. If a person believed in a spherical earth or said that it is the earth which goes round the sun, that person was considered as someone who was regressing towards the worship of fire.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Cf. Mola Qadir Modarresi, 'Komalay Zhekaf', in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 67.

¹²⁹ Karimi, *Zabihi*, 82-3.

¹³⁰ Modarresi, 'Komalay Zhekaf', 67. A useful comparison is the opposition of the clergy to the establishment of a modern judicial system in Iran in the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution. See Foroughi, "Modernisation of Law". Foroughi recounts that wearing hats, neckties and glasses were 'considered as ostentatious and westernised tendency'.

Opposed by *Maktab-e Quran* (Pe. A Quranic school), the first modern school in Saqqez was established around 1918 ‘with the support of Sadr-olama Mofti’, the representative of Saqqez for the Majlis in three periods from the ascension of Ahmad Shah (1909) to the end of Reza Shah’s rule (1941).¹³¹ He was the founder of ‘Ahmadia national four-class in 1921 [...] which eventually became a six-class school called Shahpour in 1925’, followed by the foundation of a secondary school for girls in 1935.¹³² The inception of modern education was, thus, marked by the efforts of individuals who carried with them the educational ideas of the Constitutional Revolution. In addition to the linguistic needs and educational policies of the modern Iranian state, its authority, in spite of a negligible budget, led to an increase in the number of elementary and secondary schools. Although the introduction of modern education was a significant development, primary sources indicate a slow process for the period between 1920 and 1940,¹³³ which was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War followed by the political crisis that Iran experienced until the coup of 1953. Nevertheless, in a society affected by abrupt regional and international upheavals since the Constitutional Revolution, the cultural revivals in Kurdistan between 1939 and 1945, symbolised by *Zhe Kaf* and its organ *Nishtiman* and then the short-lived Kurdish Republic, multiplied the impact of educational efforts. These inspired the population to participate in politics and engage more actively in educational, social and literary activities. Indeed, such upheavals proved to be crucial factors for creating widespread enthusiasm for social change in Kurdistan primarily because they

¹³¹ Rezayi, "A Study". Other representatives from the Kurdish region to the Third *Majlis* included Asadula Haji Mirza Khan, Sardar Mu‘azam (Farajola Khan), Qasem (Mirza Khan Tabrizi) from Sauj Belagh, and A‘zaz al-Saltaneh. For this see *Kaveh*, Year 1, No. 29 and 30, 8-9.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Cf. *Ta‘lim va Tarbiyat* (*Amuzesh va Parvareh* since 1938) between 1925-1938. Published by the Ministry of Education, the earlier issues of this journal contained more educational statistics and articles on provinces. Later issues, however, gradually became embroidered with the pictures of Reza Shah and his son, accompanied by eulogising articles; Modarresi, ‘Komalay Zhekaf’.

created a momentum for the popularisation of modern ideas. At the same time, this period marked the emergence, or proliferation, of modern Kurdish intellectuals too who gradually parted with religious education. Therefore, as the result of ongoing social and political transformations, and modern education, these intellectuals were composed of either non-*hojra* educated or those, as in the case of Qane‘, Hemin and Hazhar, who had been transformed into modern intellectuals possessing a strong social consciousness.¹³⁴ A case in point was Qane‘ (Muhammad Kabuli, 1898-1965), a *hojra* educated. Influenced by modern progressive ideas and shaped by the impact of the October Revolution of 1917, his poetry was transformed from love poetry into a socially and ethnically critical one. As evident in their books, both Hemin’s and Hazhar’s poetic careers were propelled by the experience of the Kurdistan Republic, which also signified profound intellectual transformations in a worldwide context.

The Constitution of 1907 ‘provided for public education [...] through the Ministry of Education’.¹³⁵ In the 1920s and 1930s new educational laws were ratified and culminated in the establishment of Tehran University in 1935. ‘Nevertheless, the modern education system [under Reza Shah] remained small, urban, formalistic, and elitist; it was barely able to meet the qualitative and quantitative needs of a modernizing economy’.¹³⁶ The education system in this period became centralised and continued to expand in the decades after the Second World War. By 1978 there were nineteen universities in Iran.¹³⁷

In Kurdistan, the introduction of modern education by establishing public primary schools in the time of Reza Shah remained limited to towns and cities. *Ta‘lim wa*

¹³⁴ Qane‘, *Divani Qane‘*, 3-17.

¹³⁵ Ashraf, "General Survey of Modern Education".

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Tarbyiat, published by the Ministry of Education since 1925, reported in its educational map for 1925 the existence of only one such school in Sanandaj, Sauj Blagh, Kermanshah and Urumia; there is no indication of any intermediary schools (Figure 11). However, memoirs refer to the existence of primary school in other cities such as Saqqez in the 1920s. The first public school in Sardasht, another Kurdish city, was established in 1310 [1931/2] with 25 to 30 students.¹³⁸ Statistics of later periods also indicate, for example, a low level of primary and secondary enrolments until the 1960s.¹³⁹ Moreover, in Reza Shah's years political considerations overshadowed educational and social concerns to a great extent. Persian became compulsory and therefore incited resentment towards the government and increased interest in Kurdish. While residing with a rich family as *mirza*, Hussami became acquainted with Kurdish literature through people from Iraqi Kurdistan where Kurdish was not forbidden at schools.¹⁴⁰ In the time of Reza Shah, except in a few villages for their military and strategic positions, rural areas were entirely deprived of modern educational centres. Instead the presence of gendarmerie characterised this era. In Hawraman region in south-western Kurdistan with a legacy of Zoroastrian culture, literacy was seen as a social duty also for women who to some extent managed to become literate in mosques. Furthermore, to the traditional role of the landowners in the upkeep of *hojra*, mentioned above, was added, gradually in the 1960s, responsibility and authority for the opening of modern schools. Their wealth had provided funds for *hojra*

¹³⁸ Mohammadpur and Iman, "Taahirate Ejtemai Dar Sardasht", 25.

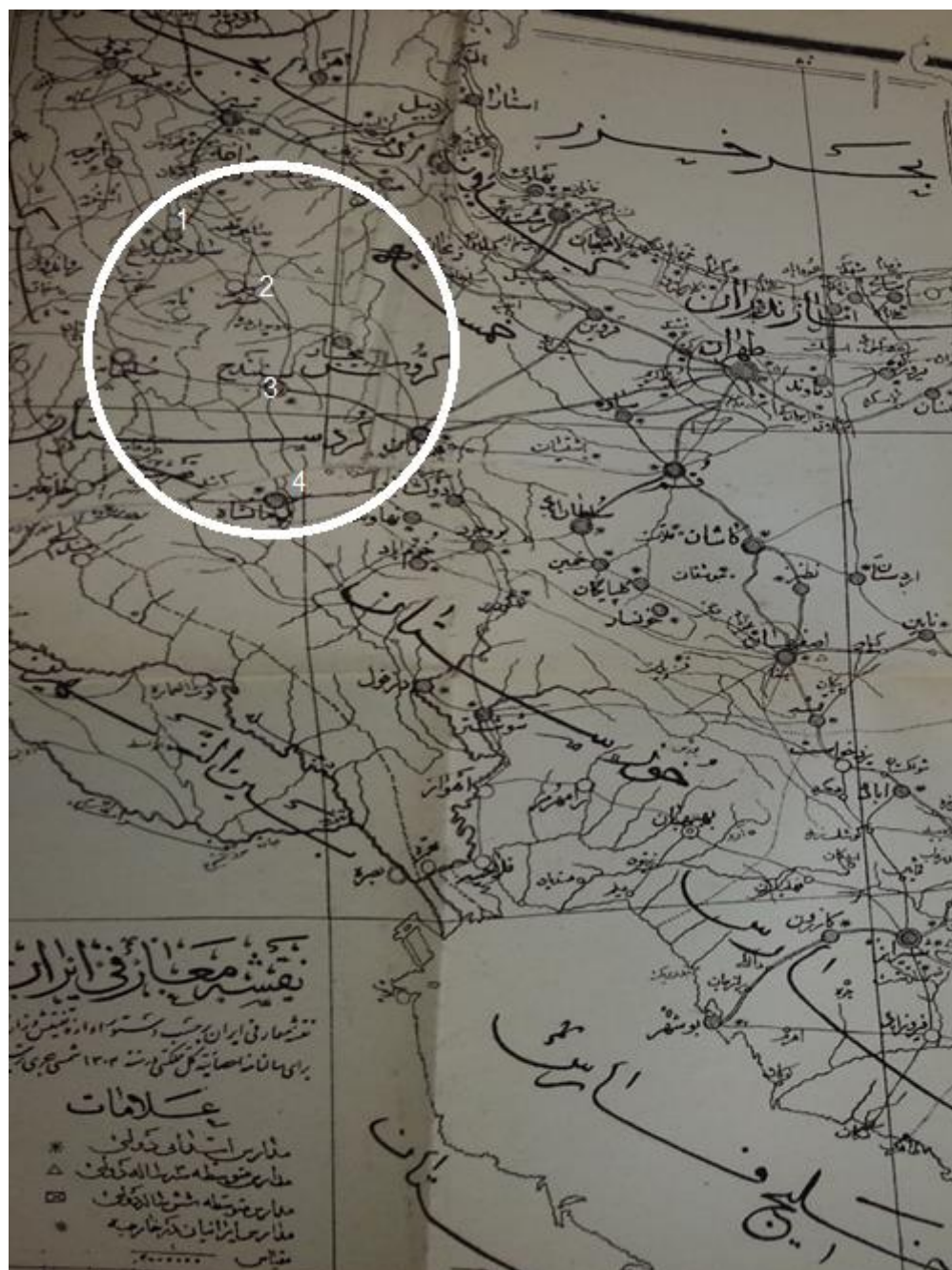
¹³⁹ Rezayi, "A Study".

¹⁴⁰ A number of factors enabled the practice of Kurdish language in education and administration in modern Iraq. This included political considerations to create a balance of Kurd-Sunni against the Shi'a majority in Iraq and cultural measures to satisfy the Kurds in the modern nation-state of Iraq. However, as the League of Nations reported in 1932, 'Up to the present day, measures designed to meet Kurdish desires have been fairly successfully sabotaged. This may have been due in part to lack of energy in tackling natural difficulties but, on the whole, it must be regarded as the result of deliberate reluctance to take steps believed to tend towards the separation rather than the unity of the community of Iraq'. For this see 'League of Nations', (E2640/140/34), dated 23 March 1946, TNA, FO371 52702. For politicisation of ethnicity in modern Iraq, see Wimmer, *Shadows of Modernity*, Ch. 6.

and this time their permission was a prerequisite for the establishment of a school. This is another factor that explains the existence, or the lack of, both religious and modern schools in rural areas. With the demise of the landowner's influence and wealth following the socioeconomic developments in the late 1960s and 1970s, *hojra* lost its patronage and subsequently faded away. However, as discussed in the next chapter, they were not immediately replaced by schools in the rural areas and the absence of modern schools continued to characterise rural life in those decades. In addition to this, modern primary and secondary schools in cities reduced enthusiasm for the traditional education; they became increasingly attractive by providing new means and paths to employment in the public sector.

To sum up, although the state's authority was crucial for educational changes, it was not a sole actor and in some occasions, for instance the cultural revival of the early 1940s, also a barrier. As an interesting development, the dialectic of (a limited) modern education and agency produced an urbanised new educated generation, who promoted social and political awareness in Kurdistan and became another social force alongside notables and tribal chiefs. Social change and transformation had assigned a historical role to the non-state agents of change to stamp their mark on social change.

11. Kurdistan in Naqsheye Ma'arefi Iran (the educational map of Iran), 1304/1925.



Source *Ta'lim wa Tarbiyat*. This educational map is modified by adding a white circle that roughly covers the Kurdish region in Iran. Numbers 1-4 show big cities of Mahabad, Saqqez, Sanandaj, and Kermanshah respectively.

- * Public primary schools
- △ Three-year elementary schools
- ☒ Six-year elementary schools
- * Iranian schools abroad

To sum up, one can argue that the dialectics of religious and modern education in Kurdistan advanced literacy and gradually produced an educated generation whose composition was not limited to the privileged anymore. *Hojra* remains crucial in the history of education. It produced Kurdish literary figures who, since the end of the nineteenth century, became the advocates of the popularisation of modern education. Insofar as the state is concerned, the continuation of the Constitutional educational reforms in the first half of the twentieth century, in the shape of modern primary and secondary schools, however limited, changed the educational landscape of Kurdish society. A complementary factor, which seems to be in many respects more responsible for the spread of literacy than the state itself, was undoubtedly the literate, the non-state agents of change.

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF KURDISTAN

The process of the consolidation of the central state thorough the militarisation of public spaces by a new, conscripted army and the expansion of bureaucracy in the forms of various institutions shaped the political structure of Kurdistan. Modern political structure of Kurdistan began to be influenced by military considerations because of, as Afshar warned, the region's potential to be dominated by political developments in other coterminous and ethnically similar societies.¹⁴¹ On the rumours of 'the independence of the Ottoman Kurdistan, Afshar wrote in 1925 that,

Our domestic policy should be so that the Iranian Kurds, who are from the Iranian race and their language is one of the Iranian languages, gradually but quickly integrate with [*amikhte*] other Iranians in order to eradicate any differences. Solutions include the establishment of

¹⁴¹ Mahmood Afshar, "Shooreshe Kordhaye Osmani Wa Masaleye Kordestan," [The Revolt of the Ottoman Kurds and the Kurdish Question], *Ayandeh*, No. 1 (Tir 1304 [1925]).

[modern] schools in that region, the propagation of Persian, the teaching of the history of Iran, promoting a feeling of *Iraniyat* among the population and, finally, extending the railways from the central parts of the country to that region in order to create further social and economic relationships between the Kurdish and Persians speaking [peoples]. Whenever this task, i.e. “the Persianisation of the Kurds” was carried out, then the independence of the Ottoman Kurdistan and the existence of a racially Kurdish government [in that country] [located] between a Turkish state and us will not harm us.¹⁴²

Moreover, The Reza Shah’s rule became increasingly oppressive and the suppression of the elements of Kurdish identity, which were perceived as inimical to a unified Iranian identity, was carried out by the gendarmerie in both urban and rural areas. ‘In the time of Reza Khan Pahlavi’, Hazhar recalls, ‘no one could even think about writing in Kurdish’ and people buried Kurdish books such as the *divans* [anthologies] of prominent Kurdish poets in order to protect them.¹⁴³ It had become routine for the gendarmes to interrupt life in the rural areas:

When [I was living] in Taragha [in the vicinity of Bukan], the gendarmes visited that village on a daily basis. They regarded [wearing] Kurdish dress, [using] tobacco and [cigarette] paper, and any seemingly unfriendly gesture of people towards [both] themselves and their horses as a big sin.¹⁴⁴

The consolidation of the state crucially included eradicating or debilitating local powers. At least the urban population welcomed the weakening of the powerful tribes’ grips on their lives. The historian, Ayatulla Muhammad Mardukh, praised the ‘end of chaos’ in

¹⁴² Ibid., 62.

¹⁴³ Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*, 47.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 49.

Kurdistan ‘by this strong and erudite state’ in his Nowruz celebration speech.¹⁴⁵ Hazhar also retells, ironically, the story of the Shikaks’ pillage of Sauj Belagh in autumn 1921:

The army of “Smail agha Simko” raided Sauj Belagh to fight the ‘*ajams* [the Turks]. [It is claimed] that they went house to house and looted the Kurds. It seemed that in the same way that Smail agha had wanted to liberate us from the ‘*ajams*, he also wanted to [‘] liberate [’] us from that we had [achieved] thanks to the ‘*ajams*. They pillaged everything [...] they even robbed the babies [...] they robbed women of their pyjamas and then, apologising, turned their faces away [in order not to see their naked bodies]. The Shikaks robbed the Kurds but did not kill them; they [however] killed any Turkish-speaking person [they came across].¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, both the disarmament and displacement of tribes, which were followed by building *padegans* or military bases in growing towns and strategic villages, constituted various elements of a militaristic policy. A dozens of tribes with tens of *taifas* or sub-tribes were forced to settle, while many others were robbed of their properties and sent to exile.¹⁴⁷ The policy of compulsory settlement, called *takht-e qapu* (wooden door) instead of the ‘black tent’, forced many other tribes such as the Peshdaris to cross the border and reside in what is now Iraqi Kurdistan. This policy, which included the incarceration of tribal leaders even after being disarmed, was to some degree reversed in the early 1930s because of its negative economic impact on, for example, meat production.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Mardukh, *Mezhui Kurd*, 628-29.

¹⁴⁶ Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*, 12-13. Hazhar explains that although ‘*ajam*’ means a powerful Iranian, the Kurds of the Mukriyan region [the region between Saqqez and Mahabad] use ‘*ajam*’ to refer to their Turkish-speaking neighbours because they have been ruled by and suffered under Turkish-speaking administrators’. See *ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴⁷ Muftaba Berzuyi, *Vaz’iyate Siasie Kurdistan* [Political Situation in Kurdistan] (Tehran: Fekre Nou, 2000), 240-52.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 289.

The social and economic plans in the time of Reza Shah were usually preceded by military expansions and considerations. This continued to restrict the capacity of the state to implement effective social programmes in order to improve social conditions in Kurdistan. The degree of the militarisation of the public space fluctuated according to the existence or the absence of political crises in Kurdistan. However, the military gaze of the state became constant; and this is the precedent set by military policies and means in the reign of Reza Shah.

Furthermore, political participation through the election of *Majlis* deputies since the Constitutional Revolution was restricted, or did not develop further, with the effect that the election of representatives eventually became a symbolic act by the 1970s. Moreover, the ascendancy of Persian as the official language of both education and administration created formidable obstacles for Kurdish language to thrive in cultural and literary spheres. The number of journals or newspapers remained near zero until the 1979 Revolution. All these elements effected political participation negatively. However, in addition to the free space, which the Kurdistan Republic and the Musaddeq era created, the resolution of political and social activists to promote political and social awareness by publishing and distributing ‘illegal’ journals, books and pamphlets, which addressed issues concerned with politics, culture and literature, counterpoised dictatorship and the authoritarian modernisation.

Therefore, a modernising Kurdistan began to assume a political structure shaped by military considerations, reflecting the tension between *Kurdayeti* and the process of creating a homogenous nation-state. Indeed, by claiming to protect borders, the state has ever since attempted to legitimise military considerations and policies. Although the administrative division of provinces clearly revealed military and political motivations

behind such policies, the emergence of discourses of power in the formation of modern political structure of Kurdish-Iranian society merits a brief review.

Politically, the state's cultural and linguistic efforts to ensure a unified Iranian identity led to a period of political suppression, which included banning Kurdish in schools, introducing a dress code and persecuting the literate individuals and literary works.¹⁴⁹ The idea of *vahdat-e melli-e Iran* (Pe. the national unity of Iran) provided intellectual legitimacy for the state's linguistic policies. Affected by the political instability and wars, the Persian journals in the 1920s reflected a political culture in which a strong state and 'national unity' were advocated as core principles creating a politically stable and socio-economically advancing Iran. For example, Afshar defined national unity as 'the political, moral, and social unity of people living within the territory of Iran' in order to 'preserve the political independence of Iran and its territorial integrity'.¹⁵⁰ The national unity stipulated uniformity in custom and the eradication of diversity in dress, language and names.

We believe that until national unity in language, morals, dress, etc., has been achieved, imminent danger to our political independence and territorial integrity will always exist [...] Some Persian-speaking *ilats* [tribes] can be transported to reside in foreign-speaking [i.e. non-Persian-speaking] regions [*navahi-e bigane zaban*], while foreign-speaking tribes can be moved to Persian-speaking regions. Foreign geographical names [...] must be replaced with Persian names. The country must assume new suitable [administrative] divisions and avoid using the [current] names of Khurasan, Baluchistan, Fars, Azerbaijan, and Kurdistan [for its provinces].¹⁵¹

Afshar, however, did not want to sound 'Chauvinistic' or 'imperialistic'. Indeed, such ideas emanated from an existing feeling of threat from outside of Iran, and also from

¹⁴⁹ See Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*, 52-53.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Mahmood Afshar, *Ayandeh*, 1925, No. 1.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

a common wish of intellectuals and statesmen such as Muhammad Foroughi and Ali Akbar Davar to build an effective modern state. Afshar also defended 'deconcentration' as against both 'centralisation' and 'decentralisation' and did not necessarily agree with any administrative divisions.¹⁵² Nevertheless, he remained adamant about the unity and conformity of diverse Iranian communities under the banner of Iranian national unity in every sphere of life.¹⁵³

The implementation of such ideas on behalf of an authoritarian state inevitably presupposed coercive means as it was going to face resistance against ethnic unity and conformity. As regards the Kurds, the tension between these hegemonic and resisting identities incited violence also on behalf of the Kurds and became the origin of modern armed struggle perceived as a legitimate form of resistance against ethnic oppression. Abbas Vali rightly observes that the suppression of Kurdish identity became the root of a continuing conflict with the central government, and of the violence in Iranian Kurdistan.¹⁵⁴ However, the modern Kurdish armed struggle in correlation with militarisation is still largely understudied.

A powerful Iranian national narrative, which conceptually marginalises the Kurds and their history, assumed an oppressive attitude towards cultural and political rights regarded inimical to a centralised, territorially defined modern Iran. Indeed, Kurdish identity became the victim of two historical factors. First, a painful memory of Iran's territorial loss in the hands of the great powers which inflicted severe damage to its territorial integrity and independence; the written evidences are the treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828). Logically, therefore, the modern Iranian identity was based on the

¹⁵² Mahmud Afshar, *Ayandeh*, Vol. 4. No. 1-2. (Mehr-Aban 1338 [Oct.-Nov. 1959]).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Vali, *Kurds and the State in Iran*, 19.

pillars of national unity and territorial integrity with the effects that the Kurds began to be judged by the abovementioned principles, leading to ingrained prejudices against them. Second, this unified Iranian identity established the Persian community as the core ethno-cultural nation and this resulted in the marginalisation of other ethnic communities, including Kurdish.¹⁵⁵ Although in this unification ‘differences’ were not codified, for example, by issuing different *Shenasnameh* or ID based on ethnicity, as Brubaker has shown was the case in the *multinational* Soviet Union, it institutionalised difference.¹⁵⁶ All residents of Iran were defined as Iranian but ethnic groups such as the Kurds became a modern *qaum* (ethnic community) as a constituent of the modern nation of Iran connoting an ‘undeveloped nation’ at the same time, as opposed to *mellat* (Pe. nation); and their cultural and political rights were defined in connection with ‘Iran’ as a unified nation. Moreover, the institutionalisation of difference in favour of the Persian community is exemplified by the clash of definitions between the Iranian and Kurdish national narratives over the concepts of *qaum* and *mellat* which is originated in the processes of the formation of modern Iranian and Kurdish identities. *Qaum* justifies the Iranian national narrative’s denial of political and cultural rights of a community, which is, in turn, represented by the Kurdish national narrative’s definition of itself as *mellat*, in need of recognition.

Therefore, the politics of modernisation entailed an enduring clash between Iranian and Kurdish identities and their legitimising national narratives. Except occasionally in the time of political crises, wars and revolutions, a powerful and stable central government has continued the oppression of Kurdish identity and guaranteed the

¹⁵⁵ For the link between the idea of ‘core nation’ and a nationalising and modernising state see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 83.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 and Ch. 2.

ascendancy of the discourse of a unified Iran; a discourse which is in fact very divisive. Such claims and policies began to interrupt *modus vivendi* and encourage violent modes of resistance. Indeed, the political structure of Kurdistan began to be shaped by political and militarily motivated policies, on the one hand, and the resistance of *Kurdayeti*, on the other. The continuous resistance to power and its discourses as regards the Kurds thus originated in the process of the nationalisation of Iranian identity. However, discussed in the next chapter, Kurdish society proved to be more receptive of socio-economic change with the effect that *Kurdayeti* found itself in a paradox of ethnically resisting but socially adaptive.

CONCLUSION

Against a historical background, this chapter aims to illustrate the integrating tendency of modernisation and social change in Kurdish society since the early twentieth century. The crucial elements in this process are identified as attempts at socio-economic reforms, institutional changes, and the state's politics of modernisation. Although Kurdistan experienced a sluggish socio-economic change until 1960 and its social order did not radically alter, it witnessed the emergence of new socio-economic trends, affecting its social structure. The state was the main authority in this process and its policies were shaped by various historical and ideological factors as well as political exigencies. This socio-economic process laid the foundation of modernising institutions such as education and healthcare. They did not become widespread under Reza Shah. Nevertheless, they were significant as foundations for reforms in later decades. Undeniably, based on a literary background, modern education yielded a new educated, urban generation which became a social and political force in political upheavals alongside tribal chiefs of tribal communities. Furthermore, the efforts of members of such a generation to simultaneously

spread literacy and promote social, ethnic and political awareness of people, highlight the crucial role of non-state agents of change. This becomes more evident in the way the political structure of Kurdish society continued to change according to the modern nation-state's nationalistic and militaristic attitudes, on the one hand, and the resistance of *Kurdayeti*, now intellectually transformed by second half of the century, to the state's 'national unity', on the other. In this way, therefore, modernisation surfaced a paradox, to be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: The Paradox of *Kurdayeti* and Modernisation

INTRODUCTION:

THE SUCCESS OF MODERNISATION, THE FAILURE OF HOMOGENISATION?

In the process of the integration of Kurdish society in modern Iran a paradox around identity surfaced: the modernisation of Iran did not render *Kurdayeti* irrelevant but reshaped and reinvigorated it along modern national lines. Modernisation ensured *Kurdayeti*'s continuous presence in the political field of modern Iran rather than inducing the assimilation of the Kurds and the disappearance of Kurdish identity.¹ Put simply while modernisation succeeded in creating a shared, strong socio-economic and political field, attempts to create a homogenous entity failed in eradicating *Kurdayeti* in both perception and practice. In an expanding, shared socio-economic base the Kurds in Iran began, and continued, to define themselves as Iranians. Nevertheless, the suppression of Kurdish identity and its resistance to a hegemonic Persian culture continued to generate a prolonged tension between a homogenising state and the Kurds in Iran. This paradox of socially integrating but ethnically resisting has formed a Kurdish identity that socio-economically and culturally maintains a sense of belonging to Iran on the one hand, and to *Kurdayeti* on the other.

Two important reasons necessitate a detailed analysis of this paradox. The first reason is an academic one: studies on the Kurds in Iran are largely influenced by a

¹ Sami Zubaida defines political field as 'a whole complex of political models, vocabularies, organisations and techniques which have established and animated [...] a political field of organisation, mobilisation, agitation and struggle', Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State: Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: Tauris, 1993), 145-46.

homogenous approach to the Kurds who are treated as a single people regardless of being parts of different political fields since the formation of the nation-states following the First World War. To this, one must also add an age-old coexistence of the Kurds with other culturally and linguistically distinct communities. Although there are exceptions, for example David McDowell has briefly discussed socio-economic change, and highlighted a number of important economic and political consequences,² such studies are usually ignorant of decades of socio-economic and cultural transformations of such countries, especially in Iran. On the other hand, many other scholars such as Martin Van Bruinessen, Amir Hassanpour and Abbas Vali have produced valuable works usually concerned with ethnic nationalism, Kurdish language and Kurdish identity. However, the absence of social change studies—to a great extent Hassanpour is an exception—in addition to a dominant homogenous approach, has led to an academic decline of studies on Kurds in Iran with the effect that a scholar of Kurdish studies expresses bewilderment at the ‘temporarily quiescent’ of Kurds in Iran.³ In this respect, a crucial question which is often overlooked is why a culturally distinct people continue to define themselves in the framework, and not outside of modern Iran. One can argue that, unlike the case of ‘national identities’ in Eastern Europe, the Kurds do not have an outside homeland. For example, as Brubaker has noted, millions of ethnic Russians, Hungarians, Albanians and Serbs, who live in other states in Eastern Europe, have ‘abruptly transformed from state-bearing nationality in a vast and powerful state into vulnerably situated minorities of uncertain identity and loyalty in weak and struggling successor states’.⁴ Therefore, their ethnic affinity does not align with their state of citizenship. However, this does not apply

² McDowell, *The Kurds*, 254-59.

³ Cf. Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds: A Modern History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publisher, 2016), Ch. 5.

⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 56.

to the case of the Kurds including those living in Iran. Although the Kurds recognise ethno-cultural affinity with other communities outside of Iran, an outside homeland, i.e. a Kurdish state that could give them a state-bearing identity, has been absent. In fact, 'the framework of Iran' accentuates the absence of any outside homeland. (The formation of a Kurdish government in Iraq effectively since 2003 has never led to an 'outside homeland'). Secondly, social transformation is a crucial factor shaping Kurdish political behaviour and society in Iran. Indeed, except for a turn to social change studies by Kurdish-Iranian academics inside Iran since the early 2000s, this point has been largely overlooked in Kurdish studies. Attempts to make the factor of social change and transformation central to studies focused on the Kurds in Iran both enhance our understanding of a transforming society and assist us to link social transformation with social, cultural and political behaviours.

KURDAYETI AND THE NATIONALISATION OF IRANIAN IDENTITY

Kurdayeti in both theory and practice continued to enjoy a formidable base for its existence and also for the formation and transformation of the values to which the Kurds adhered. Modern *Kurdayeti* is a national perception of self, formed as the result of nineteenth century literary transformation in the wake of the cultural superiority of Europe. However, practically, it has been shaped and reshaped in reaction to the advance of other nationalisms and the formation of modern states, crucially in the context of decades of socio-economic and political developments in such states.

This study perceives *Kurdayeti* not as a fixed term but rather as both a politico-cultural *stance*, a term borrowed from Brubaker, and a practice.⁵ *Kurdayeti* represents a

⁵ Ibid., 60.

self, re-fashioned by modernity, and incorporates means to achieve a desirable socio-economic condition and a promoted cultural position for that Kurdish self. Distinctive ethnic and cultural characteristics necessitated this transformation, while subjugated political status and the impoverished social conditions of Kurdish societies, expressed explicitly by poets such as Hajj Qadir Koyi in the end of the nineteenth century, made progressive, educational and evolutionary ideas the necessary concomitant of a national conception of self and history. Moreover, the demise of the Kurdish Emirates as a result of modernising centralisations contributed to a process in which the Kurds were conceptually redefined as ‘ethnic minority’ in the nation-state. A number of regional wars between the remnants of the Emirates and the surrounding states since the middle of the nineteenth century, including the famous rebellion of Sheikh ‘Ubeidula in the early 1880s, regarded by many as the origins of Kurdish nationalism,⁶ exemplified tensions in that process. Meanwhile, the transformation of Kurdish poetry into a social discourse to promote national consciousness marked the start of refashioning self in the process of the formation of a Kurdish national identity, making attractive the claim of a recent study that this was actually the origins of Kurdish nationalism.⁷

In fact, both the processes of the transformation of the Kurds into an ‘ethnic minority’ in a modern nation-state and refashioning self took place simultaneously. The early periods of the former process with its political consequences were to some extent discussed above. The latter process is equally significant for forming national, historical and political consciousness of the Kurds. Indeed, *Kurdayeti* is not merely resistance to the onslaught of other dominant identities, including Iranian or Persian; it is a worldview too. Furthermore, the emergence of a modern perception of self in Kurdish poetry was

⁶ Cf. Vali, *Kurdish Nationalism*.

⁷ See Qaderi, "Modern Kurdish Poetry".

followed by other literary outputs namely historiography and journalism which transformed historical perception and simultaneously promulgated modern *Kurdayeti* based on a national perception of self and history. For example, modern Kurdish historiography provided both means to fulfil, as Koyi lamented, a long overdue recording of Kurdish history and the historical authenticity needed; it enriched books and journals which began to flourish in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸

In practice, the legacy of various regional Kurdish movements inspired later political activists who began to emerge in inter-war years Iranian Kurdistan. For example, the impact of the *Khoyibun* (For Self) movement in Syria is reflected in the activities of the emerging educated, urban generation, epitomised by Abdulrahman Zabihi (1920-1980), while movements led by tribal chiefs and sheikhs such as Simko, Sheikh Mahmud Barzenji and Sheikh Sa'id Piran in Iran, Iraq and Turkey, respectively, enriched a Kurdish social memory.⁹ As regards Iran, Simko's rebellion and quest for political power was a precursor to later political developments. As one of such activists asserts,

If we have a glance at the leading members of *Komala-i Zhe Kaf*, we will realise that they were a group of *runakbir-i sharistani* (Ku. urban enlightened) [...] they formed the foundation of *Zhe Kaf* and Zabihi was more informed than others. I believe the *Kurdayeti* that inspired him [Zabihi] to form such an organisation originated in both a [contemporary] intellectual movement, existed in Iraqi Kurdistan, and a reciprocal relationship between Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan[s]. Materials, books, [and] memoirs published in Iraqi Kurdistan found their ways into Iran. This in addition to rebellions in other parts of Kurdistan and the defeat of Sheikh Mahmud's uprising. All these had impact on Kurdish enlightened in Mahabad.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. works by prominent historians such as Husein Huzni, Muhammad Mardukh, Amin Zaki Beg.

⁹ For Zabihi's biography see the Kurdish Academy of Language website, <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/?q=node/124> (accessed 27/01/2017).

¹⁰ Hamadamin Siraji, "Interview with Hamadamin Siraji" in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 192-193.

A survived Zabihi's letter includes the name of many more activists living in other cities such as Saqqez, Sanandaj and Kermanshah.¹¹

Therefore, these years marked the emergence of Kurdish political societies exemplified by the Kurdish revival which effectively paved the way for the formation of the Kurdistan Republic of 1946 through its active political and intellectual engagements in the early 1940s. The Kurdistan Republic of 1946 which followed was a result of a period of foreign occupation of Iran (1941-1946) in which Kurdistan had been experiencing political freedom as well as cultural revivals since the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Furthermore, the proliferation of political and cultural activities as the consequence of the fall of Reza Shah originated in at least three decades of major political developments since the Constitutional Revolution. This background compels us to pay more attention to this unique experience than it has usually been the case with authoritative histories of Iran which have contributed to a chronology in which the Kurdistan Republic of Mahabad is treated too briefly as a 'secessionist' attempt, thus avoiding other important factors along with favourable circumstances, caused by the presence of the Soviet Union in Iran, in its formation. The Republic was a democratic experience which grew to reflect the dual process of modernisation and homogenisation, undertaken by a modern state which, enjoying 'the monopoly over the right to define identity', explained the Kurds as inextricable part of modern Iran in order to guarantee territorial and moral boundaries of Iranian political community. As asserted above, the Republic was the outcome of several decades of political developments and socio-economic, cultural as well as intellectual transformations since the Constitutional

¹¹ Ibid., 194.

Revolution, in general, and the outbreak of WWII, which weakened the central state, in particular. The presence of a friendly Russian army, in the same way as a debilitating central government, undeniably favoured the formation of the Republic and led to close relations which involved taking advice and conducting trade. furthermore, *Nishtiman* and *Kurdistan* reflected not only intellectual transformations or the advance of Kurdish national desires, they mirrored a dynamic and transforming society which was embracing modern progressive ideas. This said, the current study is mainly concerned with the place of the Republic in the dual process and attempts to explain its formation, programme and legacy in light of broader socio-economic, political and intellectual transformations which manifest the formation of Iran's modern Kurdish society.

The Republic was announced a few months after the foundation of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan in September 1945, the manifesto of which included 'an autonomous Kurdistan within the frontiers of the Persian State'.¹² It has been argued that by doing so both the party and the Republic betrayed the slogan of 'independence' which had been advocated by *Zhe Kaf* which was then 'mysteriously' absorbed in the Democratic Party. The idea that *Zhe Kaf* was transformed into the Democratic Party is disputed and the latter is perceived by many as the end of *Zhe Kaf* and its desire for an independent Kurdistan.¹³ On the other hand, Eagleton sheds light on the matter by stating that the change of the name was the result of Baghirove's (the Prime Minister of the Soviet Azerbaijan) advice to Qazi Muhammad, the president of the Republic, as he believed the new name and structure under a Central committee were more in tune with

¹² 'The Kurds of Persia', dated 28 March 1946, TNA, FO371 52702 E2782/104/34; see also the first proclamation of the Republic in Muhammad Ezzat, *Hukkamati Komari Kurdistan: Namekan W Balgekan* [Kurdish Republic: Correspondence and Documents] (n.: n., 1995), Document 1, 18.

¹³ Karimi, *Zabihi*, 100-120.

the new age of ‘democracy’.¹⁴ It is true that *Zhe Kaf* referred to ‘independence’ and a ‘Great Kurdistan’ in its publications. A distinct Kurdish nationalism is exemplified, for example, by revealing the atrocities against the Kurds in the region and the outcome of recent unfavourable treaties of Lausanne (1923) and Sa‘dabad (1935), but also by providing an enduring Kurdish calendar.¹⁵ Indeed, ‘*Long Live Kurd[s] and the Great Kurdistan*’ embroidered *Nishtiman*’s cover page.¹⁶ However, the meaning and circumstances behind such concepts can be contested for the following reasons:

firstly, *Zhe Kaf* had at its disposal Kurdish texts, mainly poetry, written by prominent Kurdish intellectuals, e.g. Hajji Qadir Koyi (d. 1898) and Mulla Muhammad Koyi, from other Kurdish regions. These figures and their works generally aimed at promoting national consciousness and spiritually elevating Kurds to the rank of other nations. They emphasised the role of education, revealed social and political conditions of Kurdish societies and maintained a critical view towards the *agha* class.¹⁷ Therefore, such texts did not necessarily reflect the political and social situation in *Iranian* Kurdistan. On the contrary, a deprived social situation characteristic of a Kurdish society motivated such activists as Zabihi to provide social and political alternatives. Indeed, because of the absence of both the central government and a Kurdish political entity, achieving freedom and independence for the Kurds was a general guideline to overcome political and social subjugation. In reality, according to a Foreign Office correspondence,

During 1944 Mahabad became the centre of Kurdish nationalism in Persia, where Qazi Muhammed [...] emerged as the leader of the movement. His original aims appear to have

¹⁴ Eagleton, *Kurdish Republic*, 57.

¹⁵ Cf. *Nishtiman*, No. 7,8,9: 1323 [1944], 2; For this calendar see ‘The Special Calendar of Komala-i Zhe Kaf for 1943-4 and 1944-5’ [in Kurdish], in *ibid.*, 561-74.

¹⁶ *Nishtiman*, No. 7-8-9, Spring 1944, in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 575.

¹⁷ Cf. ‘Zhe Kaf’s Gift for the Kurdish Youth,’ (in Kurdish) Numbers 1-2-3: 1953, in *ibid.*, 536-60.

been to obtain local autonomy on lines similar to those demanded by the 'Iraqi Kurdish spokesmen [...] In November he [Qazi Muhamed] visited Tehran with several tribal leaders and attempted, with incomplete success, to convince the Persian authorities of his loyalty, although independent reports credited him with the admission that many Kurds did not want independence, but would be content with a fair administration, schools in which Kurdish was allowed, health services and improved communications.¹⁸

Moreover, the growing popularity of Russia owed itself primarily to the friendly treatment of people by the Red Army, unlike the brutal actions of the Tsarist Army during the First World War, its economic records as well as its victories over the Nazi Germany. The Manchester Guardian wrote in 1946 that

Nothing have been done [in Iran] to improve the living conditions of the Kurds and other subject races. The problem of combatting the nomad form of life and banditism was being regarded as a problem of a military character and not as an economic problem which constituted the Russian approach to the problem. It was not therefore surprising that the Kurds were beginning to look to [Russia] in the North.¹⁹

While the Kurds were encouraged by the presence of the Soviet Union in Iran, in 1944 there was 'no evidence of direct Russian support for any larger schemes for Kurdish independence' nor the formation of the Kurdish societies owed anything 'to Russian inspiration'.²⁰

Secondly, the foundation of the Kurdistan Republic, which defined itself in the framework of Iran, apparently marked a *sudden* turn in slogans and political programmes

¹⁸ 'The Kurds of Persian', (E2782/104/34), dated 28 March 1946, TNA, FO371/52702.

¹⁹ Philips Price, "On Situation in Iran," *Manchester Guardian*, January 1946, Quoted in 'Manchester Guardian: 'On Situation in Iran'', (E2268/104/34), dated 28 February 1946, TNA, FO371/52702.

²⁰ 'The Kurds of Persia', (E2782/104/34), dated 28 February 1946, TNA, FO371/52702.

hitherto advocated by *Zhe Kaf*; Zabihi along with other members supported the Republic. However, this turn ought to be interpreted according to circumstances developed in the context of the political and socio-economic transformation of Iran. *Zhe Kaf* advocated a will, however justified, while the Republic reflected a *Kurdayeti* (re)configured in that continuous transformation.

Indeed, from the proclamation of the Republic onwards the Kurdish movement is unmistakably Iranian as it defines itself in the framework of Iran. Later literary and political activities present more evidence for this claim. For example, the only issue of *Rega* (Way), a bilingual Kurdish and Persian journal, which was published by Zabihi and some other remnants of *Zhe Kaf* only a few years after the end of the Republic, clearly asserts:

Kurds have only one wish and it is freedom based on a real democracy. [...] Based on these [abovementioned] reasons and historical evidence as well as the statement of Mr Mozaffar Firuz, the incumbent deputy Prime Minister who has explicitly recognised our rights and existence in the treaties of Tehran and Azerbaijan, we *Iranian* Kurds demand our natural rights. [These rights] consist of an autonomous, democratic government which conforms to a central, democratic government of Iran and [its] Constitution.²¹ (Emphasis added).

Furthermore, although during later decades until the 1979 Iranian Revolution *khawat-i natawayati* (Ku. national struggle) for the eradication of *stam-i natawayati* (oppression because of nationality) is a constant theme, the influence of the Thirdworldist ideas of the 1960s and 1970s on *Kurdayeti* is evident. As regards Iran, *Kurdayeti* continued to formulate its political and cultural demands in the framework of Iran (see the following

²¹ *Rega*: the Central Organ of Komala-i Zhe Kaf, No.1, 1327 [1949], in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 631.

chapters) and Kurdish movements of the 1960s and 1970s reflected this trend. Abdulrahman Qasimlu's, a leading Kurdish-Iranian politician, doctorate thesis (1962) argues for the unity of all people of the Middle East in their struggle against imperialism.²² It would be naive to consider such defining of self in the framework of Iran as tactical to appease the Iranian intellectuals or the government because such interpretations of political behaviour would ignore the process of change and transformation, modernisation and homogenisation. This is in spite of the fact that the Iranian national narrative's accusation of the Kurds of attempting to secede from Iran is constantly denied by the Kurds, while a Kurdish national narrative continues to reinforce the myth of the Great Kurdistan. A more recent example of an increasingly 'Iranian' nature of the Kurdish movement in Iran is the 1979 Revolution, in which Zabihi, now overshadowed by new political forces but in agreement with them, wrote in the summer about 'a free and independent Iran and the brotherhood of nations', and approved 'autonomy in the framework of the Islamic Republic'.²³ There were attempts by some veterans in vain to form an inter-regional Kurdish party.

Therefore, the definition of self in the framework of the myth of the Great Kurdistan, which inspired *Zhe Kaf*, and in the framework of Iran, as did the Republic, must be explained according to circumstances surrounding such an organisation and entity and not as opposing elements in *Kurdayeti*. Intellectually, *Zhe Kaf* was radicalised in the context of the Second World War, the increasing popularity of the Soviet Union and socialist ideas as the result of this country's impressive role in the War, while modern ideas and literary transformations shaped its tenets. Politically the Republic, to whose

²² Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 255.

²³ Birzoo [Rahman Zabihi], 'The Blessed Revolution of the Iranian peoples' [Kurdish], in *Chrika-y Kurdistan*, No. 1, Tamuz-Ab [July-August] 1979, in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 519-528.

disposal *Zhe Kaf* surrendered its resources, was the culmination of a series of cultural and political movements as well as the revival of local tribal powers, while structurally it characterised socio-economic, political and cultural bonds between Kurdish society and Iran as the amalgamation of various ethnic communities. This is not to say that the termination of *Zhe Kaf*, followed by the Republic and the Democratic Party, was an inevitable outcome of some socio-economic process. Indeed, to the conformity of these societies to a central government, many other factors such as state coercion, decision-making, historical conjuncture and cultural factors have played a great role. However, this study insists that *the act of defining self in the framework of Iran becomes more evident as Iran continues its modernisation and social transformation which incorporate all such factors.*

RELIGION AND LANGUAGE

Culturally, *Kurdayeti* owes its existence to a number of formidable elements, above all perhaps religion, as both a way of life and a mechanism of ethnic persistence, and language.

The Sunni religion of the Kurds is a way of life different from that of the state-sponsored Shi'a religion in Iran and has been one of the most salient components of Kurdish identity. It has also provided resistance against homogenisation.²⁴ In this sense, religion has had at least two major effects. First, historically it continues to serve a Kurdish ethnic identity distinctive of an Iranian one which favours Shi'a Islam. Here religion, rather indirectly, creates a bulwark for Kurdish ethnic identity. Quite interestingly, religion has followed and confirmed Kurdish identity because it provides a

²⁴ See Smith's discussion on the role of organised religion in ethnic persistence among 'vertical' communities. Smith, *National Identity*, 62

distinguishable Kurdish way of life. In addition to this, in the modern history of the Kurds in Iran political and literary lives of the prominent politico-religious figures as well as the *hojra*-educated activist-intellectual, e.g. poets, historians and journalists, attest to the fact that Kurdish ethnic identity is prioritised over the religious identity.²⁵ For example, membership in *Zhe Kaf* was free for the adherents of different faiths but it was conditioned on swearing allegiance to Qur'an for Muslims or 'to anything sacred' if members were believers of other faiths such as Yazidis.²⁶ In this case, religion as a means to ensure the faithfulness of the members served to legitimise *Kurdayeti*. Indeed, the prioritisation of the ethnic sentiments continued throughout the process of modernisation in later decades with the effect that with increasing secularisation of thought and also the growing influence of Thirdworldist ideologies on Kurdish political groups in the 1960s and 1970s, religion lost such a contributory role. However, a nascent religious *Kurdayeti* or nativism towards the end of the 1970s in Iran could be detected (see Chapter 5).

Second, distinctive religious beliefs left the Kurds generally unaffected by theological transformations in the Shi'a thought at least since the eighteenth century which provided formidable ideological foundations for later Iranian nativist ideologues who equated modernisation with Westernisation.²⁷ As Sunni, the Kurds have followed a different religious hierarchy than that of the Shi'a Muslims and this includes immunity against concepts such as *ijtihad* (interpretation) practiced by a *mujtahed* (interpreter of the Shari'a) and, most importantly, *marja'e taqlid* (source of emulation). The latter has the potential to become *Imam* who is infallible in his leading of the *umma*. This is not to

²⁵ For a good discussion of the priority of national identity over religious identity see *ibid.*, 6-8.

²⁶ Modarresi, 'Komalay Zhekaf', 68.

²⁷ For a history of theological transformations in the Shi'a thought see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). On the ideologue of the Islamic Revolution see Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006).

suggest that Shi'a identity has historically overshadowed an Iranian national identity. Quite the contrary, pre-Islamic mythology plays a fundamental role in shaping a modern Iranian identity with the affect that in historical conjunctions its mythical figures and stories are Islamicised; here it is the religion that needs legitimacy.²⁸ Comparatively, while Kurdish mythology has heavily borrowed from Iranian mythology and its pre-Islamic legends, it has largely served an ethnic, and not religious, Kurdish identity.

Therefore, not being influenced by either theological transformations or existing religious rituals in Shi'a tradition, Kurds as a religious minority under a religiously biased state in Iran have inclined towards 'secularism' and non-religious political movements. Therefore, insofar as religion is concerned, any analysis of the nationalisation and modernisation of Iran ought to consider those two aspects that pertain to the relationship between an ethnic and a religious identity. In what ways this relationship is maintained or transformed when both the state-led modernisation and social change intensify, is a question for later chapters. For the moment, we can assert that the indirect impact of a distinctive religious tradition, religious prejudices, and direct impact of secular movements, shaped and reinforced a rather secular *Kurdayeti* in its struggle for ethnic rights. However, with the intensification of modernisation in later decades of the twentieth century, it seems that a religious *Kurdayeti* gradually becomes another distinctive contributor in struggle for those rights.

Kurdish language is another salient feature of Kurdish identity. The literature is pioneered by Hassanpour's *Language and Nationalism in Kurdistan*, in which the author presents a history of linguistic oppression by modern nation states including that of Iran. A distinct Kurdish language and endeavours to preserve it were factors that ensured the

²⁸ Saeed Talajooy, "Rostam and Esfandiyar: From a Heroic Age to Page, Stage and Screen", unpublished article, 2011.

persistence of Kurdish language in the face of Persianisation of language and culture in Iran. However, there are other factors which distinguished linguistic policies within that country with that of, for example, Turkey where outright linguistic purification and annihilation occurred.²⁹ These include historical and cultural bonds as well as the simplification movements which affected linguistic policies and preceded modern linguistic oppression, respectively. Indeed, the exigencies of a modern state in Iran to create military, and later, medical and educational vocabularies also guided linguistic policies. These factors, also ignored in a pioneering study such as that mentioned above, allow us to broaden our understanding of the processes of both linguistic simplification and purification in Iran, and gauge the radicalism of linguistic policies in the time of Reza Shah compared to a much more radicalised one under his son, Muhammad Reza Shah.

Therefore, while Kurdish language in modern Iran began to suffer in the sphere of literature, education and administration, such factors reduced barriers for those who enhanced *Kurdayeti*'s linguistic capacities. Thus, benefiting from history and individual endeavours, Kurdish language in Iran continued to function as a distinctive feature of Kurdish identity and served *Kurdayeti* in its struggle for ethnic or national rights.

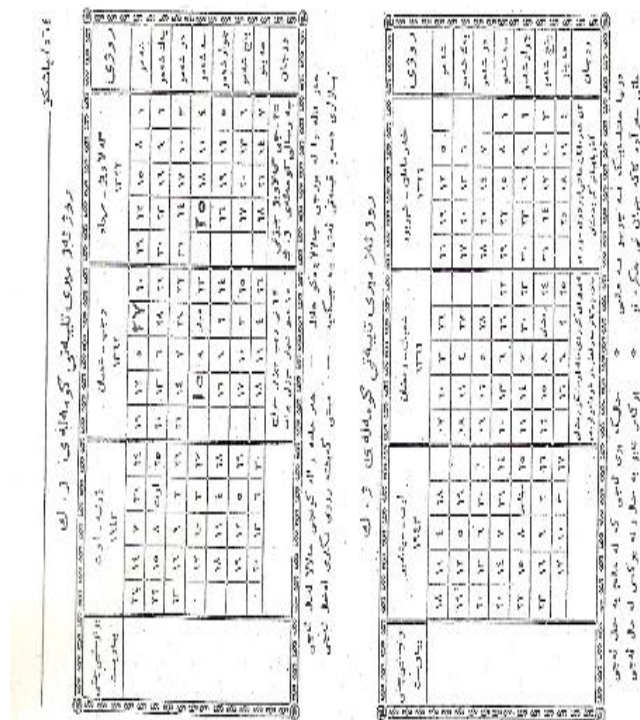
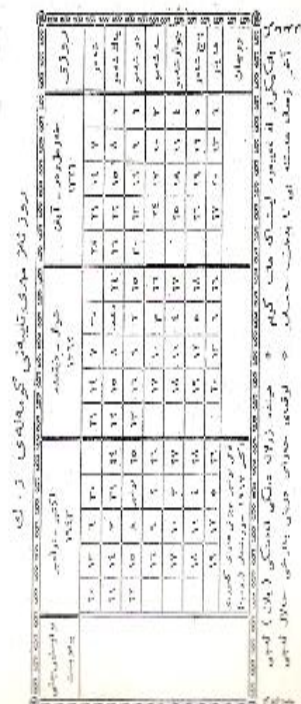
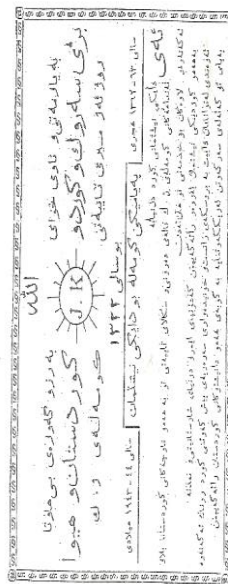
CONCLUSION

While political and economic modernisation seemed to succeed in determining the integrating tendency of Kurdish society, the nationalisation of Iranian identity not only failed to erase Kurdish identity, it unwittingly provided motivation for its perseverance. In this regard, many important elements of Kurdish ethnic identity such as religion and language continued to function in favour of *Kurdayeti* by reinforcing distinct ethnic

²⁹ See R. John Perry, "Language Reform in Turkey and Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, No. 3 (Aug., 1985); Kia, "Persian Nationalism"; and Rustayi, *Tarikhe Nokhostin Farhangestane Iran*.

characteristics. *Kurdayeti*, therefore, exists as a synthesis of nationalisation and modernisation of Iran. The nationalisation of Iranian identity continued to provide legitimacy for *Kurdayeti* as a sense of both belonging to and struggle for the Kurds and Kurdistan; a sense which, based on a historical *ethnie*, i.e., according to Smith, an ethnic community with its historical and cultural elements,³⁰ continued to be reinforced theoretically and practically by intellectual endeavours and political movements. Modernisation, on the other hand, sustained its tendency to integrate Iranian societies into a distinct, Iranian socio-economic and political field which formed the source of defining self in the framework of Iran since the Second World War. This said, *Kurdayeti* was not a rigid phenomenon, but continued to reshape according to historical conjunctures and intellectual transformations in the second half of the century. However, it became more embedded in the framework of Iran as Kurdish society became socio-economically more integrated into that country because of the intensification of modernisation and social change, especially in the era of the White Revolution.

³⁰ For more on *ethnie* see Smith, *National Identity*, Ch. 1.



Nishtiman's cover page reads 'Komala-i Zhe Kaf's Special Calendar for 1322/1943-1944'.

Quoted in Karimi, *Zabihi*, 561-567.

13. Single dimensional approach to social change in Kurdistan.

<p>Mechanisms of modernisation according to modernisation theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State as the sole actor • Modernising institutions • Implementation of the elements of modernisation • Western patterns of development 	<p>Some major obstacles to development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Big capital ◦ Technology ◦ Modern institutions ◦ Modern values <p>• Cultural resistance</p> <p>• Existing religious and ethical values are not favourable to individuals aiming at material progress</p>
<p>Traditional society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static • Underdeveloped • Rural; a passive peasantry • Simple division of labour based on 'mechanical solidarity' • Superstitious • Patriarchal • Backward 	<p>Traditional Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrational • Exposed to traditional institutions and way of life • Undisciplined • Averse to new experience, perception and value • Engaged in unspecialised and simple division of labour
<p>The Elements of Modernisation (patterns of development are largely those of the United States and Western Europe)</p> <p><i>Institutional approach</i></p> <p>Socio-economic elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrialisation • Demographic growth • Application of scientific technology • High specialisation of labour • Urbanisation • Modern education • Secularisation • Hygienisation • Developed media • Stratification • Effective differentiation <p>Political elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalisation of authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The replacement of large number of traditional, religious, familial, and ethnic political authorities by a single, secular, national political authority • Centralisation of power • The differentiation of new political functions (legal, military, administrative, scientific) and the development of specialised structures to perform those functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Political participation via New institutions (e.g. political parties and interest groups) 	<p><i>Sociopsychological approach</i></p> <p>Cultural and ideational elements (individual modernisation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Modern' is a syndrome of certain qualities • Modernisation of ways of thinking and feeling • Change in behaviour, values and perceptions • Change in ways of perceiving, expressing and valuing • The modern is a [Weberian] ethos • Modern is a spiritual phenomenon, a mentality

Becoming Modern

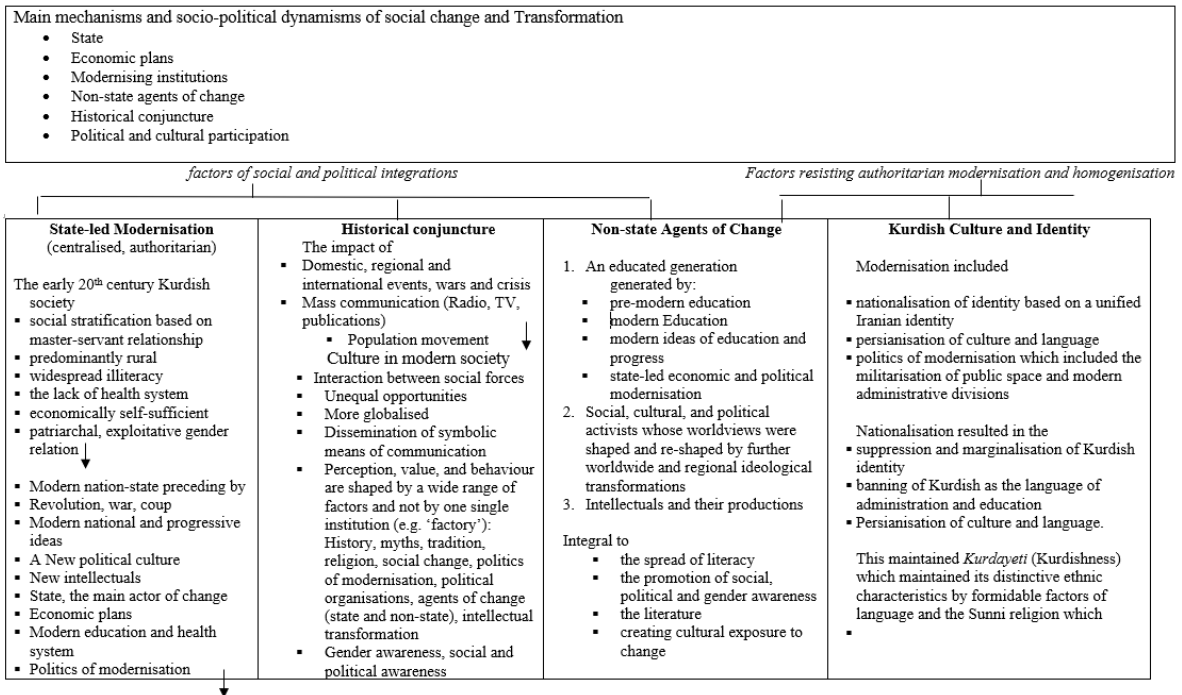
Figure 13 continues

Modern society	Modern Man	Required personal qualities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, centralised authority • Loyalty to the state • Urbanised • Industrialised (e.g. factory worker) • Disciplinary • Rational • Complex division of labour based on merit • Scientific • Secular • Strong Modernising institutions (factory) with universal affect • Technologically developed • A developed media system • Democratised • Globalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial • Disciplined • Experiencing modern life • Employed in complex, rationalised, technocratic and bureaucratic organisations • E.g. factory worker, active worker • Possesses rewarding roles • Possesses exposure to modernising elements • Shaped by industrial milieu (factory) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to new experience, ideas, feeling and acting • Readiness for social change • Intellectually able • Able to plan ahead • Rely on institutions • Valuing Technical skills • Educated, Aspired, appreciate science • Engaged in a complex division of labour
<p>Modernisation will result in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political authority of the state • Universal response to institutional and individual modernisations • Making mostly irrelevant the uniqueness of the culture and society • Secularisation: societies become more secular as they become more modernised. • 'transcultural similarities in psychic properties of individuals creates basis for common response to common stimuli' • Independent nuclear family • Women's rights • Religious beliefs not being able to stand urbanisation and industrialisation • Greater secularism 		

Sources: Inkeles and Smith, *Becoming Modern*; Lerner, *The Passing of the Traditional Society*; Huntington, 'Political Modernization'; Kerr, and *et al.*, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*; Pappe, *The Modern Middle East*; Nikki R. Keddie, 'Secularism and the State'; Waters, *Modern Sociology*.

Many modernisation and development theories acknowledge, for example, that industrialisation is not a single model, the result will be a plural industrialisation, and cultural and economic preconditions can be different according to different countries with the effect that some cultures can be more resistant than others. However, in these theories it seems that 'industrialisation' is a substitute for 'modernisation/Westernisation' and 'industrial society' is a substitute for 'modern society' in contrast to 'traditional society'. Cf. Kerr and *et al.*, *Industrialism*, 31-86. Historically, the context of the Cold War is very influential in shaping development theories.

14. Multi-dimensional approach to social change in Kurdistan.



In multi-dimensional approach:

1. The results of the interaction of above factors are not generally predictable nor can be logically expected using development theories.
2. Positive and negative ramifications of state-led reforms shape social and political structures of the society
3. The crucial role of non-state agents of change in social change can be identified.
4. Critical readings of the following concepts and subjects are required:
 - 'Traditional' vs. 'Modern'
 - Modern education
 - Modernising and integrating institutions
 - The resistance of religious institutions
 - Secularisation
 - Backlash to secularisation
 - Politics of modernisation
 - Social and political awareness
 - Gender order
 - Land reform
 - Industrialisation
 - Infrastructural development
 - Migration to cities
 - Urbanisation
 - Modern city
 - Media
 - Political participation
 - Political, cultural and armed resistance

Part II: Kurdistan and the Era of the White Revolution

The White Revolution is a social transformation unprecedented in Iran's three-thousand-year history.

Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, 1962¹

While the Westerner has become disillusioned and the Western culture is declining, we are marching behind the West [...] and keep boasting about the advances of the West and claiming that we will soon be one of the greatest advanced countries of the world.

Reza Barahani, 1969²

Part I discussed a limited, but significant, social change in Kurdish-Iranian society in the decades prior to the era of the 'White Revolution' (1963-1979). Part II is an assessment of this society's social transformation in the two decades following the inception of the reforms in the early 1960s. The Shah's Revolution, based on the existing ideas in Iran to reform the Iranian state and society, developed into a dream of making Iran a Great Civilisation, while the spiralling oil revenues effectively contributed to the intensification of the state-led modernisation. Political consequences notwithstanding, reforms profoundly changed Kurdish-Iranian society too. Therefore, it is the task of the following chapters to interpret and analyse the way this took place.

¹ Quoted in Afkhami, *The Shah*, 768.

² Reza Barahani, *Tarikhe Mozakkar* [Masculine History] (Tehran: Nashre Awwal, 1984), 79.

Chapter 3: The White Revolution: Origins, Aims and Economic Plans

INTRODUCTION

By the time the 1979 *popular* revolution began, the White Revolution had profoundly transformed Iran. The scale of this transformation extended to Kurdish society too, and therefore, an analysis of social change in Kurdistan in the two decades of the 1960s and 1970s is inevitably linked to change across Iran. The popular revolution did terminate the *Pahlavi's* modernisation. However, the state and the society that emerged bore indelible marks of this earlier period because it had laid strong foundations for the continuation of future state-led modernisation, regardless of the nature of the succeeding state. This chapter briefly contextualises the White Revolution and identifies the origins of the ideas that led to its inception. This is necessary for three reasons. First, the historical context and reformist ideas, which were already in circulation, invite a critical reading of the White Revolution for us to identify its negative and positive ramifications as the result of a mixture of factors peculiar to contemporary Iran. Secondly, as regards Kurdish society, this critical reading assists us to place this period in the dual process we have been following, and not regard it as an inevitable transitory point in the age of modernity, let alone an unprecedented event in 'Iran's three-thousand-year history', ahistorical and inflated claim by the reigning monarch. Finally, this approach enables us to identify other contributing factors alongside the state in the process of change and transformation and engage in a critical assessment of the consequences of reforms too. In addition to an overview of the reaction to the White Revolution in Kurdistan, the conceptualisation of the White Revolution is followed by presenting a general discussion of some other significant topics in the process of the socio-economic transformation of the Kurdish

region: the Kurdish region in economic planning; land reform and its general consequences for the rural class structure; and infrastructure.

AN IDEA EXPLOITED

As an idea, 'White Revolution' had been cultivated by Iranian intellectuals at least since the early 1940s.³ It represented a non-violent transformation of Iran under a 'leader' who would also pacify the presumed perils of different hues of red, yellow, and green (later black) menace, i.e. Communism, the Far East, and Islam, respectively. The initial meaning of the term served a 'parliamentarian regime' and aimed to create a 'balance between the executive and legislative powers'.⁴ In contrast, the Shah's White Revolution primarily aimed to pacify the multifaceted threat to the monarchy in order to preserve and strengthen its foundations. Simultaneously, the ideas of land reform, the centrepiece of the Shah's White Revolution, had been advocated since the early 1940s, for example, by left-wing groups to curb the power of the landowner class and transform agriculture. The division of land in Iran had been previously attempted, for instance, under the autonomous government of Azerbaijan in the early 1940s;⁵ and since it was a long-standing demand of the left, the monarch's Revolution hoped to neutralise 'the threat of Communism' by accomplishing social reforms in general and the land reform, in particular. The White Revolution not only reflected a history of genuine desires of Iranians for reform pursued since the Constitutional Revolution (1906-11), it also aimed to prevent social revolution from below. The fear of revolution from below originated in the crisis around the nationalisation of oil industry as early as 1949. As Roger Louis reveals, for the British

³ Mahmud Afshar, "Enqelabe Sefid," [The White Revolution], *Ayandeh* 3, No. 14-16 (1946), 767-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 768.

⁵ Cf. Manucher Farmanfarmaian and Roxane Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil: A Prince's Memoir of Iran, from the Shah to the Ayatollah* (USA: Random House, 1997); and Jami, *Gozashte Cheraghe Rahe Ayande Ast* [Past is the Torch of Future's Path] (Tehran: Qaqnus, 1998).

officials such as Michael Wright, assistant Under-Secretary supervising Middle Eastern affairs, 'for a long time it had been clear that the situation of 'political stagnation' in Iran could not continue indefinitely. Either the Iranian government would have to come to grips with far-reaching economic and social reform or there would be a Communist revolution'.⁶ The White Revolution was a revolution from above.

The Shah's White Revolution denotes a set of principles in the process of the modernisation of Iran. These principles were originally comprised of six points: land reform, nationalisation of forests, sale of state-owned enterprises to the public, workers' profit sharing in 20 percent of net corporate earnings, voting and political rights for women, and formation of the Literacy Corps. These were extended to 19 points by 1977. These principles, which were formally presented by the Shah, first to the cabinet and then to the Congress of the Farmers of Iran in January 1963, included reforms that had already been introduced by successive Iranian governments, mostly during the previous cabinet under Ali Amini in the absence of the Majlis, recasting much of the ingredients of the Third Economic Plan (1962).⁷ Land reform was a long-standing preoccupation of Iranian statesmen too and the incorporation of a Literacy Corps in the principles for mandatory universal education had become a law in October 1962.⁸ The government had already started land reform in northwest Iran in March 1962.⁹ This was also the case with the principle of voting and political rights for women. As an increasingly considerable social

⁶ William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 632.

⁷ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 231.

⁸ As Afkhami has noted, the idea of the Literacy Corps came from the Education Minister, Parviz Khanlari. See also Khanlari's speech at Tehran College Training on 'the situation and the future of education', entitled by the journal of Education as 'To Accomplish the Shah's Command [to form the Literacy Corps]. For this see Parivz Khanlari, "The Situation and the Future of Education," *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh* 33 (New Era) No. 1 (Esfand 1341 [Feb-March 1963]), 9-22.

⁹ Dariush Hodayun, "Eslahate Arzi Dar Iran," [Land Reform in Iran], *Tahqiqate Eqtesadi [Economic Research]*, No. 5 & 6 (Khordad 1342 [June 1963]), 38.

force in modernising Iran, women activists had continued to pursue such rights since the 1920s and pressure the state and statesmen to conceive more rights, including the right to vote.¹⁰ The Shah remained conservative especially when he faced a major challenge from the clergy.¹¹ Therefore, it was mainly the women activists who eventually forced an informal participation of women in the election of 1962, without their votes being counted, which made the Shah two days later to promise ‘the right of women to vote in the future’.¹² Ali Amini, the incumbent Prime Minister, who had advocated land reform since the mid-1940s, had used the title ‘White Revolution’ when the land reform was passed, and for whom this reform, along with women’s rights, constituted the pillars of that revolution.¹³ The Shah added new ideas such as profit sharing schemes for workers in industry, an idea he had conceived while observing life in the United States. Noted above, as an alternative to social theories of the left and as a modernising programme to prevent social revolution, the White Revolution was quickly renamed ‘The Revolution of the Shah and the People’; more points were added to the principles of the White Revolution in the following years.

This said, the novelty of the Shah’s White Revolution was in its political dimensions, though it inaugurated a profound socio-economic transformation of Iran. While it was affected by the previous attempts at reform and the preceding economic plans, the political situation in Iran granted urgency to such reforms. Domestically the dynasty had been facing a protracted political crisis since the Second World War, embodied in short tenures of successive cabinets and ultimately the oil crisis which was

¹⁰ *‘Alam-e Naswan* (the World of Women) was one of the earliest journals advocating women’s rights and advising women on social issues. For more see Elwell-Sutton, “Alam-E Nesvan,”.

¹¹ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 227-29.

¹² Mahnaz Afkhami, *Zanan, Dowlat Va Jame'e Dar Iran: 1941-1978* [Women, State, and Society in Iran] (Maryland: Foundation for Iranian Studies, 2003), 124-35.

¹³ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 227.

culminated in the coup of 1953.¹⁴ In the early 1960s and prior to the declaration of the principles of the White Revolution, a new wave of social unrest threatened the monarchy when religious and secular oppositions alike resurfaced. In effect, the Shah's revolution attempted at thwarting both the 'black and red menace'. Furthermore, economically, the Third Economic Plan seemed to have forged a rival power centre consisting of the so-called Harvard economic advisors, Amini and the Plan Organisation under Gholamhosain Ebtehaj, whose performances were judged under the shadow of the Kennedy administration (see below). This 'raised political concern for the Shah who wanted a strong army'.¹⁵ Regionally, the toppling of the monarchy in Iraq (1958) and the military coup in Turkey (1960) further increased political pressure to intensify economic development for which the oil revenue and a strong military constituted its pillars. The White Revolution, therefore, aimed at preserving the establishment by providing alternatives to other social and political forces represented by an increasingly politicised religious opposition and various reformist movements, the existence or reconfiguration of which was due to social transformation of Iran in general and the state-led modernisations in particular. In *Mission for My Country*, the Shah stipulated 'positive nationalism' and 'political democracy' for economic development to simultaneously make the opposition irrelevant and promote Iran to an unprecedented status among the world's powerful nations.¹⁶ As it turned out to be the case, he had to cross the path towards that imaginary status alone with dire political consequences for Iran.

REACTION TO THE WHITE REVOLUTION

¹⁴ For the political crisis of this period cf. Azimi, *The Crisis of Democracy*.

¹⁵ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 219.

¹⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, 220-21.

There seems to have been two kinds of reaction to the announcement of the principles of the White Revolution and the referendum in Kurdistan: an initial general reaction and a more specific one put forward by organised Kurdish activists. The White Revolution created an unprecedented opportunity to effectively challenge the Kurdish *aghas'* authority over society and benefit from a more favourable context to affect poor socio-economic conditions. An initial positive reaction to the land reform explained the need to weaken the social and political power of the landowner class. However, the continuation of a more organised opposition to the Pahlavi state and of a *Kurdayeti*, intellectually more connected to the outside world, created mixed feelings towards the reforms.

The reaction of Kurdish political activists to the Shah's announcement of the White Revolution illuminated the political dimensions of the reforms in question. The increase in the number of Kurdish university students in Tehran had led to the formation of *Yakiyati Khwendkaran-i Kurd* (Ku. The Union of Kurdish Students), which was concerned with domestic and international political developments and began to expand in 1961-2.¹⁷ An influential event of the time was the expansion of the Kurdish movement in Iraq which also attracted the support of the opportunistic Iranian government, which perceived Arab nationalism as a threat to its regional position. The state exploited this situation by organising new but controlled Kurdish publications and radio programmes. However, the state unintentionally created opportunities for Kurdish activists and literary figures to practice Kurdish language and literature. *Yakiati* 'identified itself with the Kurdish movement in Iraq with the effect that the movement's rise [in the early 1960s] and fall [in 1975] determined its fate too'.¹⁸ Moreover, the National Front and Dariush

¹⁷ Yadola Biglari, "Kurdistan and the White Revolution," interview with author, July 6, 2017

¹⁸ Ibid.

Foruhar's Iran Party turned to the Union to benefit from their active engagement in political and cultural activities and tried to absorb it.¹⁹

In these circumstances, Kurdish educated-activists treated the White Revolution as a political project and 'did not pay heed to its social promises'.²⁰ According to one such activist who founded a small bookshop called *Danesh* (Knowledge) in 1966, when he was only eighteen and later became a teacher, international, regional and domestic contexts, including the rise of the USA as a world power, revolutions in China and Cuba, the military coup in Turkey, the collapse of the monarchy in Iraq and the advance of the Kurdish movement in Iraq, 'shaped their initial opposition' to the Shah's White Revolution 'without having a deep understanding of its contents'.²¹ However, attitudes to social issues addressed in the principles of the White Revolution changed in the 1970s, when the opposition to the Pahlavi regime increased.²² Moreover, while many members of *Yakiyati* voted to participate in the referendum, some others, among them engineers, voted against it mainly because of '*Kurdayeti* and the social status of some members' who came from wealthy landowning families.²³ Nevertheless, while political dispositions were shaped according to the ideas and context of the time, 'the oppressive and inhumane socio-economic regime of the Kurdish *agha* was another factor to welcome the land reform'.²⁴ Moreover, participating in the Referendum for the White Revolution was considered a shrewd move 'to cover political activities and safeguard the organisation against SAVAK'. This said, the common characteristic of these mixed attitudes can be

¹⁹ Yadola Biglari who worked as a judge between 1354 and 57 [1975-79] in Kermanshah, recalls a meeting of the Union with the National Front, represented by Siyawash Mokri (Kermanshahi) and Kayumars Baghbani, a follower of Foruhar, in which the Union rejected any cooperation for fear of losing its organisational independence, *ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Mahmud Kaiwan, "Kurdistan and the White Revolution," interview with author, July 4, 2017.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Biglari, Interview.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

identified as a superficial understanding of the events which were taking place. For example, according to one such activists, using ‘*dehqan* (peasant) instead of newly adopted *keshavarz* [Pe. farmer] amounted only to an oppositional gesture to the Shah and thus demonstrated ‘a lack of deep knowledge of the principles concerned with social issues’.²⁵

In contrast, the popular reaction to the White Revolution was more enthusiastic.

It had a good impact on the population living in villages under the yoke of the *agha*. It upset the landowners. The idea of land reform and attempts to divide the land were not new and dated back to the time of Musaddeq [Prime Minister 1951-3], who also demanded the landowners to move to cities. During his tenure, many villages in the Gawirk region founded *Shura* [Ku. Council] to run the village. Ultimately, *Shuras* were brutally suppressed as another outcome of the 1953 coup.²⁶

The popular enthusiasm was understandable. Villagers lived under the brutal regime of the Kurdish *aghas* devoid of any basic rights. The *rashaiy*, the Kurdish serf, and *jutbanda* [Ku. sharecropper], who formed the lowest layers of the village social structure, ‘lived like slaves’.²⁷ Therefore, people, including students, teachers and staff in public offices, participated in the demonstration organised to support the referendum. Even the clergy, ‘unlike their Shi‘a counterparts, did not oppose the White Revolution at least publicly’.²⁸ However, as time proceeded, negative and positive ramifications of the reforms became more evident. The Division of land proved to be unequal because the landowners were

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rahim Amini, "Kurdistan and the White Revolution," interview with author, July 10, 2017. A teacher in the mid-1970s and an activist since the early 1960s, Amini grew up in a village near Saqqez and witnessed the inception of land reform in the area.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

able to keep good quality lands while the *rashaiy* remained landless and was forced to migrate to cities. As a result, popular discontent increased, reflecting in Kurdish activists' growing political and social awareness, too.²⁹ However, this is undeniable that the White Revolution triggered unprecedented interaction and movements of people, and connected the totally confined village life to the outside world, modern education, healthcare and new ways of life.³⁰ In attracting further rural and urban public support, the expanding, extremely attractive 'radio played a crucial role by promoting awareness on social issues such as healthcare, in various local dialects'.³¹ Both the big and small landowners viewed the White Revolution negatively, while the state continued to remind them of the peaceful nature of the Shah's Revolution, ensuring compensation for the lost lands. According to oral history, in the end *Khorde-malik* (the small landowner), 'including my sceptical father, lost more in possession and status than the big landowners'.³² However, the latter's social and political power had been dealt a severe blow, too.

Therefore, the reaction to the inception of the White Revolution can be assessed as follows. Modern, urban activists, who had become more organised, and politically and ethnically aware, opposed or agreed to the declaration of the reforms and the referendum for different *political* reasons which, as we discussed above, also explained the White Revolution's *raison d'etre*. At the same time, the initial enthusiastic reaction of the wider population, including the educated and activists, however sceptical, originated from the oppressive regime of the Kurdish *aghas* which the land reform had now begun to imperil. The state's authority was crucial to implement the long-craved

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Reshad Mustafasultani, "Kurdistan and the White Revolution," interview with author, July 3, 2017.

³² Ibid.

reforms, which began to materialise through more sophisticated economic plans. However, while the plans' directions and contents made sense in a political context, perspectives on how to transform Iranian societies had a long pedigree.

THE POTENTIAL AND DIRECTIONS OF ECONOMIC PLANS

The era of the White Revolution is distinguished by two completed Third (1962-1968) and Fourth (1968-1973) Development Plans, followed by an aborted Fifth Development plan (1973-). As scholars have noted, the previous modernising attempts of inter-war years were 'outcomes of philosophy and policy, rather than of a concrete program or strategy'.³³ The First (1949-1955) and Second (1955-1962) economic plans were at best paralysed by political instability and the shortage of revenue, whereas the spiralling oil revenue since the 1960s, and especially in the early 1970s, made possible the execution of more ambitious and sophisticated economic plans. The Second Plan spent, out of a budget of 82.3 billion Rials, 75.2 million mostly on transportation and communications.³⁴ Owing to increasing oil revenue, which reached \$958 million in the mid-1960s and rose to a staggering \$20 billion by 1973,³⁵ these plans coincided with the most significant socio-economic developments that Iran had ever witnessed. Although they continued previous infrastructural and agricultural works, improved transportation and built dams for electrical output, they concentrated on industry, mining and human resources.³⁶ Consequently, Iran began to experience unprecedented economic growth. As another illustration of this, \$6.9 billion was spent during the Third and Fourth plans and GDP grew

³³ Amuzegar, "Capital Formation", 67.

³⁴ Ibid., 68.; Plan Organization, *Report on the Operation of the Second Seven-Year Plan* (Tehran: 1964), appendix 5.

³⁵ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 427.

³⁶ See *ibid.*, 426-35. Ibid.

from at an annual rate of 8% in 1962-1970 to 14% in 1972-1973 and then to 30% in 1973-1974.³⁷

Furthermore, this period distinguishes itself for embracing more effective organisations and centres to spur economic development and conduct research.³⁸ This was, as Afkhami has noted, embodied in ‘the development tripod’ of Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Plan Organisation, and the Central Bank which ‘became a synergic force for development’ and their chiefs enjoyed a good degree of harmony.³⁹ In addition to this, economists along with reports by Plan Organisation and the Central Bank point to an increase in national income during the Second Plan despite political instabilities in the early 1960s. During this period a combination of foreign public and private loans as well as grants and credits, with a significant contribution of oil industry helped a capital formation of about \$3,500 million.⁴⁰ Moreover, the government’s oil revenue increased, of which \$810 million helped finance the Second Plan.⁴¹ In effect, both the First and Second Plans ‘were essentially financial allocations set aside for public sector projects’.⁴²

During the Second Plan, the Plan Organisation became a more established entity in economic development in Iran. Claimed as an incorruptible individual who eventually resigned as the head of the Plan Organisation in 1958, Abolhasan Ebtehaj contributed immensely to the reorganisation and transformation of the Plan Organisation. As a prelude to economic actions, he generated what was sometimes regarded as controversial

³⁷ See *ibid.*, 427-28.

³⁸ On Centre for Economic Research see Afkhami, *The Shah*, 334; and the journal of *Tahqiqat-e Eqtesadi* (Pe. Economic Research) published by the Faculty of Law, Political and Economic Sciences, University of Tehran, which contained high quality scholarly articles.

³⁹ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 322-33.

⁴⁰ Amuzegar, "Capital Formation", 69.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

or prolonged studies on economic needs of Iran and its various regions; in addition to 'qualified' Western educated Iranian economists, he employed Western economists through The World Bank, for which institutions such as Harvard topped its list.⁴³ The significance of the Second Plan, according to Ebtehaj, was the foundational and organisational basis it laid for later expansive economic plans. Nevertheless, during the Plan asphalted and rail roads were also expanded across Iran while new factories and dams went under construction.

As regards provincial development, according to Javad Mansur, the Public Relation Officer of the Plan Organisation, 'the [Second] Plan had more than enough projects [...] [but] no further funds to devote to provincial surveys of the EBASCO [Electric Bond and Share Company which provided engineering and construction services] type, as these crucially involved heavy additional financial commitment'.⁴⁴ As a result, this forced 'Ebtehaj to go slow on further provincial progress for the time being';⁴⁵ and subsequently assign the development of provinces to various foreign firms. Though unsuccessful, this included dividing Iran into five regions allocated to four foreign companies to assess their economic and infrastructural needs and engage in their developments.⁴⁶ This project enticed a *scramble* for Iranian provinces by American, French, Japanese, Italian and British firms which looked for 'the most suitable areas'.⁴⁷ In addition to increasing political pressures on Ebtehaj, the project failed because foreign companies sought propitious areas whereas undesirability of a region such as Khurasan in the east deterred, for example, British and German companies, which had not been

⁴³ Abolhassan Ebtehaj, *Khaterat-E Abolhasan-E Ebtehaj* [Ebtehaj's Memoirs], Vol. 1 (London: Paka Print, 1991), 336-38.

⁴⁴ 'Provincial Development Work', (EP1102/4), dated 31 December 1958, TNA, FO 371/140822.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ebtehaj, *Khaterat*, V. 1, 409.

⁴⁷ 'Provincial Development Work', (EP 1103/2), dated 08 June 1959, TNA, FO 371/140822.

initially included, to commit themselves and invest in that region. Instead, they pressed for a share in other regions with the French or for other projects in more central regions such as Fars and Isfahan.⁴⁸ Even in this case, UK companies were not ‘required to invest in the social development of the area, e.g. [building] schools [and] hospitals’.⁴⁹ This meant investment in certain and not properly *planned* social projects. Moreover, political considerations and economic interests on both sides shaped their approaches to provincial projects. For instance, while the Shah and Ebtehaj insisted that the interested British firms should invest in Khurasan because of the region’s rich potential but neglected situation,⁵⁰ the British considered their economic interests, regional and international political positions to avoid lagging behind others.

The end of Ebtehaj’s reign, which followed a government proposal to bring the Plan Organisation under the control of the Prime Minister, revealed to some extent the prevalent contemporary trends in the economic development of Iran, on the one hand, and the start of a more centralised planning which was going to coincide with the centralisation of political power in one individual, on the other. The origin of centralising development planning went back to the Second Plan and to the dispute between the incumbent Prime Minister, Razmara, and Ebtehaj. The former was in favour of an economic plan which provided the provinces with financial help in order to enable them to undertake their own development projects, whereas the latter’s stringent attitudes restrained such decentralising attempts,⁵¹ and mainly intended to attract foreign capital through his ideas for provincial development. Ebtehaj’s rejection of both the plan and demand of the representatives of Khuzistan, dominantly an Arabic speaking region in the

⁴⁸ Cf. ‘Provincial Development Work’, (EP 1103/1), dated 31 December 1958, TNA, FO 371/140822.

⁴⁹ Ibid. (EP1103/5), dated 10 June 1959.

⁵⁰ ‘Development of Provinces of Iran’, (EP1103/7), dated 27 January 1959, TNA, FO 371/140822.

⁵¹ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 208.

south, for a share in the oil revenue exemplified his centralising approach, favoured by the Shah.⁵² Instead of adopting a welcoming attitude, Ebtehaj rebuked them for not speaking [i.e. presenting their case in] Persian.⁵³

However, as it can be inferred from a foreign office document, the fate of Ebtehaj was sealed when disagreements between various functions of the government, e.g. the cabinet, the ministries and the Plan Organisation, revealed impatience with his meticulous methods and disregard for military budget.⁵⁴ In any case, Ebtehaj embodied the government's will for centralisation of economic development and it can be surmised that he set a precedent in this regard too.⁵⁵ Although economic development in Iran before Ebtehaj had been inclined towards centralisation, he effectively blocked initiatives from the provinces. Moreover, his plan for '*omran-e shahri* (Pe. city development) stipulated provinces to provide 50 percent of the budget, whereas the other half he projected to come from oil revenues.⁵⁶ However, Ebtehaj became increasingly unpopular with politicians for other reasons, which included his long-term planning, being both 'indifferent' to the present distress of the population and, according to some views, extravagant, so that he came to be known as someone who preferred foreign experts and loans, and an 'uncooperative, obstinate and arrogant' person, who spent four years surveying and planning.⁵⁷ That is why the incumbent Prime Minister claimed in the early months of 1959 that 'Iran had the Plan Organisation as well as a Ministry of Road, but still no

⁵² Ebtehaj, *Khaterat*, V. 1, 375.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 376.

⁵⁴ 'Development of Provinces in Iran', (EP1103/14), dated 25 February 1959, TNA, FO 371/140822.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Ebtehaj, *Khaterat*, V. 1, 406-07

⁵⁷ 'Development of Provinces in Iran', (EP1103/14), dated 25 February 1959, TNA, FO 371/140822.

road'.⁵⁸ By April, 'the various schemes for regional development initiated by the Plan Organisation [were] in suspense [...] EBASCO was told to go home'.⁵⁹

DEVELOPMENT PLANS AFTER EBTEHAJ

Enabled by spiralling oil revenues, post-Ebtehaj more comprehensive and cogent economic plans continued economic growth and ushered in profound socio-economic transformation of Iran. Moreover, encouraged by income and growth, economic planning resulted in formulating other long-term plan of Twenty-Year Perspective. The Perspective was based on a Plan Strategy, whose ideas had French origins. These latter plans also signalled the fear of the depletion of oil as the blood of Iran's economy. The axis was the Plan Organisation under Khodadad Farmanfarmaian (the end of 1960s-1972) and Abdolmajid Majidi (1972-1977). An overview of the next economic plans demonstrates the growing economic capacity of the state, on the one hand, and how the plans maintained a centralising approach devoid of specific provincial plans.

In the view of some economists, the Third Economic Plan (1962-1968), whose framework was formulated by the new Economic Bureau, outclassed the previous ones by being 'truly the first comprehensive attempt at scientific planning in Iran'.⁶⁰ Its objectives included an average annual increase in gross national product of 6 percent; maximum employment based on annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent; improvement in national income distribution through socioeconomic reform; and maintenance of reasonable price stability.⁶¹ In contrast to the previous plan which was 'simply a list of investment programs and projects' and faced 'the lack of both statistical data and

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ 'Development of Provinces in Iran', (EP1103/18), dated 13 April 1959 TNA, FO 371/140822.

⁶⁰ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 70.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

familiarity with methodological planning and techniques',⁶² the next development plans were going to be prepared in more favourable economic circumstances. Politically, although Iran was going to experience a period of stability, modernisation also intensified the opposition of an increasingly *politicised* religious force which had turned against the monarchy and was eventually attracted to the ideas of *vilayet-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic jurists) and Islamic government (see Chapter 5).⁶³

15. The Third Economic Plan (1962-1968).

<p>The Third Plan envisaged a development scheme to the tune of \$3,066 million for the public sector, to be matched with \$2,000 million of the private investment. It was financed mainly by oil revenues (55% in 1962 and 80% in 1968).</p> <p>Source: Amuzegar, "Capital Formation", 70-71.</p>	The Third Economic plan's budgetary allocations	(%).
	Communication	25
	Agriculture and irrigation	21.5
	Electric power and fuel	15.8
	Industry and mining	12.3
	Education	7.9
	Health	6
	Others	11.5

The Fourth and Fifth Development Plans distinguished themselves for being even more comprehensive in both quantitative and qualitative terms and containing clearly defined objectives. They accelerated the pace of industrialisation and privatisation by huge investments.⁶⁴ As scholars have noted, any economic ambivalence on behalf of the Shah was finally resolved when Iran's annual income from oil reached from \$200 million in

⁶² Farhad Daftary, "Development Planning in Iran: A Historical Survey," *Iranian Studies* 6, No. 4 (1973), 181-82.

⁶³ Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); on the background and formation of religious political organisation see Izzat-Allah Sahabi, *Nim Qarn Khatirah Va Tajrubah* [Half a Century Memoirs and Experiences], Vol. 1 (Tehran: Farhang-i Saba Publication, 1388 [2009]), 107-222 and 229-326.

⁶⁴ For more on the Fourth Plan cf. Amuzegar, "Capital Formation", 74-83; and on both plans see Afkhami, *The Shah*, 326-28 Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 428.

1957 to \$20 billion by 1973.⁶⁵ Up to \$10 billion, which was channelled into the plans, aimed to accelerate the pace of modernisation in all sectors ‘but particularly through heavy industrialization’.⁶⁶ Other qualitative aims included ‘a more equitable distribution of income through the extension of welfare services, particularly education, health, rural rehabilitation and urban development’; ‘export diversification in order to reduce heavy dependence on oil income’; and the modernisation of techniques and administrative reforms.⁶⁷

Moreover, the continuing increase of the shares of the oil sector and industry in GNP had made possible the inexorable pace of modernisation albeit at the expense of agriculture and export diversification. The Fifth Plan superseded the previous one in being ‘the most comprehensive’ with more emphases on industrialisation and privatisation, regarded as positive economic developments in Iran because, for example, privatisation had become an accepted concept well ahead of other countries such as Egypt, India or Indonesia.⁶⁸ In contrast to the early 1960s, the development plans of the first half of the 1970s coincided with a period of political and economic stability which made possible a more effective execution of their programmes. In this context, as becomes more evident in the following chapters, what it assumes to be a *culture of change* across Iran surfaced, reflecting both a popular and intellectual enthusiasm for socio-economic change.

⁶⁵ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 326-27.

⁶⁶ This was in ‘the fields of basic metals (e.g., steel, aluminium, copper, lead, and zinc) and minerals (e.g., petro-chemicals) scientific water preservation and water resources development, rapid expansion of power generation both for industry and agriculture and the construction of a national grid system, and utilization of natural gas for domestic consumption as well as exports’. For this see Amuzegar, “Capital Formation”, 76-78.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁸ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 324.

This said, development plans continued to retain their concentration on the expansion of modernisation from the centre and lack any specific provincial development planning. The plans' emphases on industrialisation or privatisation left out regions which lacked resources or their potential were ignored while the dramatic growth of GNP between 1963 and 1977 benefited 'the central regions, particularly Tehran, more than the outer provinces'.⁶⁹ In Kurdistan, therefore, the state's modernisation was tangible through the expansion of welfare services by government ministries and these ministries' provincial offices such as *Rah* (Road) or '*Omran* (Development). By the same token, the impressive growths of GNP and per capita income were palpable as employment in the public sector increased alongside the population's spending power. In addition to Bazaar as an integral constituent of the economy, the capital and work force in this region became heavily concentrated in the construction industry. Indeed, in the absence of 'industrialisation', the predominant mode of production continued to evolve around conventional artisanship and handicraft, and this pushed the work force towards the construction industry, which owed its expansion to a relentless pace of urbanisation. Moreover, demographic change and population movement had made the economy more dynamic with the effect that bazaar or the existing mode of production expanded. Iran's economic growth was indeed very impressive. However, in the absence of provincial planning, modernisation was felt through its reverberations originated in the capital. Instead, overshadowing economic and political contradictions, the ambitious plans such as the Twenty-Year Perspective (1972-1992) marked the determination of the Shah to take Iran towards a 'Great Civilisation', a dream based on oil reserves. Ironically, as scholars have noted, the Perspective was designed based on a pessimistic view of the

⁶⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 448.

world and urged the Iranians to act fast and take the opportunity to develop before Iran's 'oil was depleted'.⁷⁰ According to Manucher Farmanfarmaian, 'oil was Iran's economy' and defined its future because 'oil was not just a commodity for Iran; it was the blood of its earth and means to catapult its people into the twentieth century' and after.⁷¹ Perspective was based on an ambitious Spatial Strategy Plan, an idea of French origin, to deploy the population in relation to natural resources and deal with every region. 'Rapid growth', the plans shrewdly acknowledged, 'leads to imbalance between groups, regions, and economic sectors'.⁷² The economic crisis of 1977 forced the Shah to embrace such a strategy knowing that it would not restrain his power; Perspective and Strategy also inspired the Six Economic Plan, which was terminated with the outbreak of the popular revolution of 1978-9.⁷³

KURDISTAN IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The general improvement of socio-economic conditions in Kurdistan depended on the effectiveness of development plans to address infrastructure, transportations, communications, healthcare and education across Iran. In this respect, the development plans of the 1960s and 1970s were more effective than their predecessors. However, these plans were centralising, exclusive and lacked province-specific planning. While economic planning changed the face of Iran in general, their aims and directions did not directly benefit a peripheral region like Kurdistan for three main reasons. First, development plans and projects had been initially paralysed by the shortage of revenue and, when oil revenue meteorically increased in the early 1970s, its increase emboldened

⁷⁰ Afkhami, *The Shah*, 329.

⁷¹ Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil*, 69.

⁷² Afkhami, *The Shah*, 333.

⁷³ For more on the National Spatial Strategy Plan see *ibid.*, 330-33.

grandeur desires of the Shah. As a result, the plans became increasingly dependent on how the Shah decided to spend oil revenues. Secondly, as we noted above, economic planning in Iran historically developed amid political instability; they were politically motivated. Finally, insofar as peripheral regions were concerned, these plans served centralised planning to the detriment of provincial planning. These three aspects influenced the nature, and effected the outcome, of economic planning in both the centre and peripheries. Therefore, Kurdistan as a periphery benefited from the state-led modernisation as much as the state's infrastructural and industrial efforts expanded from the centre towards its peripheries. We have discussed dependency on oil in other parts of this study to some extent, the following is an elaboration of the last two aspects.

Political instability not only exerted negative impact on economic planning, it inspired politically motivated reforms. The White Revolution, as we discussed above, was itself the outcome of the fear of ominous perils of internal forces and thus intended to preserve the monarchy. Although the ideas which embellished the principles of the White Revolution were already in circulation, so was widespread the will to change Iran through an overarching reform process, both the state and the Shah provided platforms for the implementation of reforms. Moreover, domestic and international political developments in the 1970s, just like the pressure from the Kennedy administration did, continued to shape the plans and affect their outcomes. In effect, the uncertainty over Iran's oil reserves and the Shah's hubris further made reforms in the service of politics. As studies have noted, all projects became 'means to an end, the fulfilment of the Shah's dream of the Great Civilisation'.⁷⁴ Moreover, as the White Revolution advanced, the Shah sidelined those with more critical mind. All these clearly functioned against plans or

⁷⁴ Ibid., 233.

projects based on studies or the needs of the population of Iran, the peripheral regions of which, and subsequently these regions' rural areas, were certainly the most deprived. Probably no other topic can better highlight planning deficiencies and deprivation than the sustained city-village disparity in such regions, in general, and in Kurdistan, in particular. The disparity between urban and rural areas in Kurdistan was sustained throughout the White Revolution and no economic plan, which aimed at urbanisation, industrialisation, modern healthcare and education, addressed that issue effectively. Discussed in the following chapters, this aspect of life in Kurdistan kept out most of the Kurdish population from the benefits of modernisation. This is confirmed by Afkhami's collective study—and in this respect it distinguishes itself from many other studies on this period—that rapid industrial growth increased 'already widening urban-rural disparities'.⁷⁵ However, no industrialisation was pursued in Kurdish urban areas and consequently a bazaar-artisan economy continued to characterise the region's economic life. Moreover, an industrially feeble Kurdish city relied on trade with a village, lucky for its proximity with urban centres, to survive, without promoting the rural economy. Crucially, amid increasing urbanisation, the lack of rural and urban development plans in the aftermath of land reform made expanding Kurdish cities encircled by deprived *mahallas*. Interestingly, as regards these districts, the nomenclature resembled a division of labour: *Hammal Awa* (Porters Quarter), *jutiaran* (Peasants), *Sangborran* (Stonecutters), *Qarachi Awa* (Gypsies Quarter), *Spour Awa* (Sweepers Quarter). To this, one can add many more such as *Kiwer Awa* (Blinds Quarter) and *Diz Awa* (Thieves Quarter). Modernisation continued to maintain the chasm between city and village, depriving the latter from the benefits of social change and economic programmes

⁷⁵ Ibid.

effectively. In contrast, as regards the process of planning, in retrospect it seems that Ebtehaj's Plan and Budget Organisation, a pre-White Revolution reforming body, pursued reforms which served social and economic needs of Iranian societies. Simultaneously, it could take credit for being the continuation of the previous attempts by Iranian statesmen and intellectuals at economic planning since the Second World War, and not inspired, at least entirely, by later political concerns or grandeur ideas, which were more obsessed with producing a progressive image of Iran in the West through superficial and showy achievements than with socio-economic problems of the whole country. As the end of the 1950s approached and the threat of both internal and external political upheavals loomed large, Ebtehaj's meticulous methods and prolonged studies proved to be too much for the fragile nervous system of the Iranian politicians to take. However, as regards the Kurdish region, Ebtehaj's centralising tendency and his demand that the provinces should contribute immensely to the budget, did not go in favour of such a region which had a weak infrastructure and lacked financial resources. Finally, political considerations overlooked many other crucial aspects such as Kurdish culture and identity with the effect that they remained areas prone to tensions and conflicts (see Chapter 5).

Finally, the tendency to centralisation outlasted Ebtehaj's era with the effect that economic plans, perspectives and strategies that followed, served a centralising state and an absolute monarch. Consequently, economic planning and social reforms in the peripheries reflected the overall trend across Iran and made these regions the terminus of economic expansion from more central regions. It is beyond the scope of this study to present a comparative study, the modernisation in the Kurdish region was not an exception vis-à-vis other regions of the country. However, in many respects each region reacted to change differently based on its history, culture and socio-economic structures.

Moreover, the idea of ‘provincial development’, however inadequate, did not survive into the White Revolution, whose increasing principles did not simply bother to address different regions in different ways. Therefore, politically concerned development plans, the misuse of revenue and the preoccupation with centralisation hindered socio-economic change in peripheral regions such as Kurdistan and Khuzistan, and determined the scope and pace of change—as discussed above, Ebtehaj’s Plan Organisation rejected a plan by the latter’s representatives. This was also the case, as we analyse it later, with the expansion of modern institutions such as healthcare and education. On the other hand, the state became even more political in those regions where distinct culture and identity continued to create reasons for concern. Consequently, whereas the Persianisation of culture and language through modern education, and, by the 1970s, audio and visual means of communication ensured the suppression of distinct identity, it was no coincidence that the White Revolution enhanced the role of SAVAK, the secret intelligent service (established in 1957), as a brutal force to quell political and cultural activism.

EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS OF MODERNISATION

Land reform, infrastructural developments and modernising institutions such as modern education and healthcare were effective mechanisms of modernisation, which entailed profound socio-economic change in Kurdistan by the end of the 1970s. Modern education and healthcare are discussed in Chapter 4. The following section presents an overview of the other two processes.

Land Reform

The literature on land reform in Iran is relatively vast and they provide a general understanding of its historical background, implementation and consequences; the

literature is also supported by some extensive studies on land and landowning in Iran.⁷⁶ Published in 1979, Baqer Mo'meni's *Land Question and Class Struggle in Iran* in Persian presents a detailed account of historical backgrounds to land reform, including previous attempts by different social and political forces which pursued their economic or political interests since the Constitutional Revolution; it demonstrates how land and landowning becomes a crucial subject in the context of rapid socio-economic and political changes throughout the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁷ Despite differences in approach, it seems that there is a consensus on both the purpose and the consequences of the reform during the era of the White Revolution: land reform 'was purely a case of induced social change from above with minimal grass-roots input',⁷⁸ which failed, as it claimed, to establish social justice and end the landowner-peasant economic relations, leading to landlessness and mass migration of the peasant class to urban centres.⁷⁹

In contrast, the literature on land reform in the Kurdish region is extremely limited, although it has become a major topic for academic studies pertaining to Kurdistan, reflecting the growing number of Kurdish-Iranian academics in Iran's academic centres.⁸⁰ However, this study does not claim to fill the gap in this respect but attempts to contribute to studies on land reform in the Kurdish region by being concerned with methodology and highlighting other, understudied consequences of the reform.

⁷⁶ Cf. Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991); and James A. Bill, "Modernization and Reform from Above: The Case of Iran," *The Journal of Politics* 32, No. 1 (Feb., 1970).

⁷⁷ Baqer Mo'meni, *Mas'alah Arzi Wa Jange Tabaqati Dar Iran* [The Land Question and Class Struggle in Iran] (Tehran: Payvand, 1979), 81-109.

⁷⁸ Abol Hassan Danesh, "Land Reform, State Policy, and Social Change in Iran," *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), 164. See also Abbas Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017), 577-84.

⁷⁹ For more cf. Nikkie R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Mo'meni, *The Land Question*.

⁸⁰ In addition to the articles on social change in Kurdistan, cited in the literature review, see Shahin Ra'na'iy, "Barresiye Ejraiye Eslahate Arzi Wa Payamadhaye an Dar Ostane Kordestan," [Land Reform in the Kurdistan Province and its Consequences], PhD Thesis, University of Shahid Beheshti, 2017.

Studies on land reform in Kurdistan rightly identify the White Revolution, in general, and land reform, in particular, as major factors in both debilitating the hold of the *agha* class on Kurdish society and accelerating social change. Methodologically, however, they tend to remain within the confines of the dichotomy of traditional and modern, concentrating on ‘positive’ impacts of the development plans. Nevertheless, one can acknowledge that recent historical research demonstrates more comprehensive discussions of social consequences of the reform.⁸¹

The land reform, *Tahqiqat-e Eqtesadi* (Pe. Economic Research) informed its readers in 1963, was the result of ‘debates [which had lasted] for almost two generations’ across Iran.⁸² In Kurdistan since the early 1950s ‘a new concept of *Keshavarz* [farmer] to replace *ra‘yat*’ [serf] had been cultivated by social and political activists.⁸³ In order to impact the life of the peasants, *Hezb-e Sa‘adat-e Melli* (Pe. The National Prosperity Party), founded by Habibolla Mohit, a lawyer and a follower of Musaddeq, organised meetings and issued exclusive cards for farmers to allow them to benefit from available social provisions.⁸⁴ Against such backgrounds and in the absence of the *Majlis*, the Amini administration initiated the land reform in Maragheh in northwest of Iran in March 1962 by ‘bequeathing the peasants land deeds which had been obtained from previous landowners’.⁸⁵ The journal asserted that ‘the biggest shortcoming of land reform [was] the lack of popular support’ and thus warned that ‘denting the power of big landowners might not lead to a profound transformation of agriculture in Iran nor to the amelioration

⁸¹ Cf. Fiaz Zahed, "Gozari Bar Qanoune Eslahate Arzi Dar Iran," [A Review of Land Reform in Iran], *Pazhohesnameye Tarikh [Historical Research]* 3, No. 11 (Winter 1394 [2016]); Ra'na'iy, "Land Reform in Kurdistan".

⁸² Hodayun, "Land Reform in Iran", 38.

⁸³ Biglari, Interview.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Hodayun, "Land Reform in Iran".

of the peasantry's living conditions'.⁸⁶ Although the contributors to the journal believed that such reforms would serve both *yeganegi-e melli* (Pe. national oneness) and economic growth necessary to tackle economic problems in 'backward societies', their articles reflected a concern with a critical reading of the economic needs of Iran, which, as demonstrated in the articles, contrasted the political ambition of the monarchy, and reflected shared intellectual and popular expectations. On the other hand, as noted above, politically instigated reforms did not guarantee a radical transformation of the prevalent landowner-peasant relationship nor were they necessarily concerned with the provision of social needs or prepared for the consequences of land reform.

The appalling socio-economic condition in the rural areas, reproduced under the regime of the landowner class, demonstrated the magnitude of the problem which the land reform intended to address. In the early 1960s, the peasantry in Kurdistan was a poor social class, landless and deprived of educational and medical services. Village was largely disconnected from city because of the lack of suitable roads or the absence of other means of communication. The rural class structure and economy, discussed in Part I, continued without significant changes, though peasantry and nomads were now more sedentarised. Rebellion against such conditions and against the *agha* class was also a permanent aspect of life so much so that, in addition to individual subversion, collective defiance of the regime of the Kurdish *agha* has characterised Kurdish histories. One case in point, which clearly demonstrated the depth of the social chasm, was the peasant uprising around Bukan in 1952-3, which was brutally quelled by the collective military forces of the government and the landowners in the aftermath of the Coup against Musaddeq.⁸⁷ Although there were exceptions on individual level, the oppressive

⁸⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁷ For more on this uprising see Hassanpour, "The Peasant Uprising".

landowner class continued its luxurious life-style by exploiting impoverished peasant families in most inhumane ways. Children grew up in sordid environments with no education and entered premature manhood as servants of the landowner household, shepherds or land labourers. Women, already buried under household tasks and childcare, contributed to the workforce needed on the land too; *beri*, the practice of milking the cattle in the evening, was the task of village girls who had to travel to the cattle's resting point outside of the village. In villages, women were deprived of any medical help during menstruation or childbirth nor was there any medical advice on contraceptive methods. Even worse than women did in urban centres, contraceptive prevalence rate was low, families were populated, and immunisation was unheard of. Moreover, the cultivation of the land and harvesting of the crops were carried out in unfavourable topography and without effective agricultural machinery. The mechanisation of agriculture began in the 1970s; however, its pace and scope was slow and limited. In 1973-74, a decade after the inception of the White Revolution, from a total of 22,940 agricultural machineries in Iran, according to Plan and Budget Organisation, the share of Kurdistan province was 1,605, including 933 tractors and 205 Combine harvesters; two-thirds of such machineries were individually owned.⁸⁸ Even based on these statistics, the number of tractors at best covered one-tenth of the rural areas in Kurdistan, whereas combines, which began to increase towards the end of the 1970s, operated in less hilly areas close to main inter-city roads with the effect that vast areas could not benefit from them.⁸⁹ The quantity becomes less impressive if we note that because of the absence of other job opportunities, most people were engaged in activities related to agriculture or livestock.

⁸⁸Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 199.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The land reform was supposed to transform the socio-economic condition of the village life through distributing the land and making farmers and their lives independent and prosperous. The Literacy and Medical Corps were other means to this end. The Land Reform Act (1962) triggered the first stage of the reform. It allowed the landowners to retain a village or one-eighth of a village in eight villages but sell the rest to the state. This enabled the state to sell or rent out the purchased lands to sharecroppers who worked on the same land while absentee landowners residing in the cities retained the ownership of both village and land. The second stage law (Esfand 1349/ March 1971) demanded landowners either to rent out their lands or form agricultural units with farmers. The government was set to intervene to ensure the implementation of the next stages. Ostensibly, the landowners' defiance and, as scholars have argued, popular consternation pushed the government towards more radical solutions to abolish the peasant-landowner social relation.⁹⁰ The third stage from the end of the early 1970s onward, was supposed to include more strict actions on behalf of the government. The different stages, therefore, were the manifestation of an uneven and a prolonged process which continued to be affected by political crisis. For example, the replacement of Hasan Arsanjani, an ardent advocate of land reform in the early 1960s, 'set the land reform towards an unknown future';⁹¹ while the concentration of power in the hand of the Shah increased as the modernisation progressed. Land reform was not supposed to be an easy process since prior to its inception 65 percent of the Iranian population lived in some 67,000 villages. Moreover, 37 families owned 19,000 villages or 39 percent of all the villages; the rest was in the possessions of smaller landowners, who nonetheless owned a large number of

⁹⁰ Zahed, "Land Reform".

⁹¹ Ibid., 107.

villages.⁹² The Kurdish region in the west of Iran, which is bigger than the circumscribed 'Kurdistan Province', is estimated to contain at least one seventh of the total villages in Iran.⁹³

Parallel to the damage the land reform inflicted on the political and social status of the *agha* class and its liberating effect for the peasantry to move out of its oppressive regime, the peasantry faced modernisation's new challenges. The scarcity of land or other sources of income forced thousands to migrate and seek work in expanding cities inside, but also increasingly outside, of Kurdistan such as Tabriz and Tehran or in more southern or harbour cities on the shore of the Persian Gulf. As a significant consequence of this process, a new class of unskilled urban labourers and seasonal workers was formed.

The first challenge was urban life. New urban labourers usually resided with their families in poor city neighbourhoods, while seasonal workers left families most of the year and worked long hours in low-paid jobs such as building, catering and service industries. They found themselves in an unfamiliar environment, shared living space in squalid conditions with no access to social and medical services. Other negative ramifications of land reform included the migration of the entire family to work in brick-oven factories, where child labour was also essential to the upkeep of the family, and the emergence of unskilled workers in Kurdish cities as low-paid labourers or porters. Luckier porters owned horse-carts, others relied on the strength of their shoulders. Moreover, housing became the most difficult issue for the migrants, who expanded the new class of wage workers because of little gains from the land reform—'In 1351 [1972-

⁹² Ibid., 98. Mo'meni highlights the problem of official statistics during the land reform. According to him, both the number of villages, 'claimed to be around 72,000', and the number of landowners varied according to official sources. For this see Mo'meni, *The Land Question*, 259-69.

⁹³ This estimation is based on the number of Kurdish (big and small) cities and other more mixed cities in the region. On average, each Kurdish city administers between 300 and 400 villages.

3] [in Iran] 47 percent of farmers owned 3 hectares or did not own any land at all while 33 percent owned 3 to 10 hectares',⁹⁴ demonstrating an unimpressive distribution of lands. On the other hand, unable to anticipate the outcomes, the land reform never included the provision of urban facilities to assist newcomers. Moreover, around Kermanshah more Kurdish (Shi'a) Failis migrated to Iraq in search of income and ended up working in cleaning jobs or as shoeshine men.⁹⁵ Migration to search for work was not a new phenomenon. For example, seasonal workers had travelled to Sharazour, a Kurdish region in modern Iraq, to work for only three months a year, benefit from various bonuses and enjoy a familiar cultural environment. In comparison with the 1970s, they could transmit infectious diseases such as malaria but not sexually transmitted diseases, which many seasonal workers contracted in big urban centres of Iran.⁹⁶ The novelty of the era of the White Revolution was not only the scale and pervasiveness of migration but also the fact that it signified a social displacement of people on a more permanent basis. Resettlement in a new environment, now across Iran, carried with it estrangement from known cultural environments.

Furthermore, the land reform began to transform the rural class structure. In addition to absentee landowners and the upper class (village headmen and landowner's bailiffs), the poor peasantry, divided into landless *rashaiy* and *jutbanda*, expanded with the effect that *rashaiy* provided new labour force to the emerging wage labour class. Indeed, both inexorable urbanisation and population increase across Iran exposed the scarcity of cultivated land in rural areas and attracted landless peasants into urban workforce. As regards the social and political status of the Kurdish *agha*, the White

⁹⁴ Bahram Davari, "Tarhi Baraye Ehiyaye Keshawarzi Wa Bazsaziye Roosta [A Plan for the Revival of Agriculture and Reconstruction of the Village]," *Keyhan* 1351 [1972-3], 6.

⁹⁵ Biglari, Interview.

⁹⁶ Mustafasultani, Interview.

Revolution effectively replaced the landowner with the state (represented by the gendarmerie force) as the sole authority in the village. However, the extent of the state's authority varied according to accessibility or remoteness of an area and to social organisations. For example, in northern Kurdish region powerful tribes managed to retain their power bases to a considerable extent. Therefore, when new forms of social bonds began to challenge tribal and conventional familial bonds, this proved to be a prolonged process. Moreover, during the 1979 Revolution the opportunistic class of the Kurdish *agha*, whose power had not been completely and permanently wiped out, began to claim the restitution of its lost lands. Prior to the Revolution, the constant presence of the Shah's gendarmery force in the countryside had checked the *agha*'s political power. However, in the wake of the 1979 February uprising that terminated the Pahlavi state, the landowner class re-emerged in many parts of Kurdistan and organised mercenaries to reclaim their seized lands by force. For example, *Keyhan* reported in May 1979 that the representatives of Na'il Shekan village in the vicinity of the town of Diwandara had complained to Sanandaj City Council that 'some landowners under the leadership of 'Abbas Khan Mozafari had expelled [a number of] villagers from that village on the pretext that the downfall of the previous [Pahlavi] regime had invalidated its land reform'.⁹⁷ Therefore, this attested to the fact that the land reform had not completely diminished the economic and political power of the landowner class. As another illustration of this, the February uprising seemed to have revived 'feudalism' in the region around Mariwan.⁹⁸

Infrastructural Development

⁹⁷ *Keyhan*, 19 Ordibehesht 1358 [9 May 1979], 7.

⁹⁸ Fuad Mustafasultani, "Dar Bareye Chegunegeye Ijade Etehadyeye Dehqanan," [On the Formation of the Peasant Union] in Malaka Mustafasultani, et al. (eds), *Kak Fuad Mustafasultani* (Stettin: Print Group, 2017), 317.

The constructions of new inter-city roads, tunnels and bridges in the Kurdish region were defining moments in the transformation of the economy in the Kurdish region. Beginning in the middle of the 1930s, these constructions gradually became the hallmarks of Kurdish cities and inter-city roads.⁹⁹ For example, when ‘Czechoslovakian Skoda built Saqqez Bridge between 1314-17 [1935-38], it was both the dawn of motorised means of transportation for that city and a sign of more effective economic reforms.¹⁰⁰ Two decades later, the city’s Tobacco Factory was built in 1957. The factory was intended to regulate the production of tobacco concentrated in the region around border. However, Saqqez had been selected for its relative distance from such a region. Silo, an agricultural storage or modern mill, followed in the 1970s. Mahabad and Sanandaj also acquired such production centres which remained the only ‘industrial’ hallmarks of the Kurdish cities throughout the modernising era of the White Revolution.

It can be surmised that infrastructural improvement was inspired by a mixture of economic and political motives on behalf of the state. In addition to the growing expectations and technological awareness of people amid political and social transformation of the country, the state was economically motivated to connect the region effectively to an evolving economy. Political and military considerations in constructing factories or roads cannot be ruled out as it was evident in the construction of Tobacco centres. As another example, according to contemporaries, during the construction of Sanadaj-Mariwan road, the constructors preferred to ignore recommendations by influential regional figures, who had suggested a shorter route, because ‘it seemed that

⁹⁹ Cf. document number 44/1 of *Edareye Rah* [Road Office] dated 25/08/1331 [16/09/1952] in Presidential Office Document Centre, *Documents on Truman's Point Four in Iran (1946-1947)* (Tehran: Vizārat-i Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī, 1382 [2003]).

¹⁰⁰ Kaiwan, Interview.

the state preferred to have continuous access to higher lands for military purposes'.¹⁰¹ Moreover, other signs of political and military considerations included the construction of gendarmerie bases on inter-city roads at intervals or in what was regarded to be strategic locations throughout the region and across the border. Usually as side effects, villages, located further away from inter-city roads, benefited from roads, schools and medical centres provided they had contained a gendarmerie base. As it was specifically the case with the Third Plan, Development programmes concentrated on the construction of main roads and not feeder roads.¹⁰² Nevertheless, a few feeder roads such as Bukan city to Torjan (a prestigious village) or Khorkhora Road passed through a number of villages, hence primarily benefited from new means of transportation rather than social services. Therefore, roads in most regions initially followed the movement of the army. In the 1960s and 1970s, the military considerably contributed to connecting more villages to urban centres. Modernisation entered the Kurdish village by following the military and this led to unplanned, spontaneous provision of welfare and technology, e.g. electricity. The expansion of the state-led modernisation into rural areas in Kurdistan took place in parallel with military expansion and this is a crucial point which is ignored by social change studies of the modernisation of rural life in this period. The extent (and the state) of the roads, the level of communications and transportations, the provision of electricity, let alone durables, almost matched the extension of military roads and cables. Even in prestigious locations not all the residents benefited, for instance, from electricity, which was available to the gendarmery base and to the *agha* household. Moreover, the absence of feeder roads restrained transportation, which had started to appear more frequently with the construction or improvement of main inter-city roads especially since the end of

¹⁰¹ Mustafasultani, Interview.

¹⁰² Daftary, "Development Planning", 204.

1950s. Iran witnessed more cars and trucks upon its occupation by the allied forces during the Second World war but the impact of the Americans on the transport system was electrifying.¹⁰³ Many such vehicles scattered across Iran in the aftermath of the war and the scarcity of cars in the following decades made their presence conspicuous. For example, obtained by their new owners, some American dodges or trucks continued to be used for transporting people across Iran, including in the Kurdish region well into the early 1980s. Nevertheless, by the mid-1970s both new roads, which connected village and city, and the expansion of money economy, which attracted countryside produce into city bazaars, increased the number of Jeeps or mini trucks in the countryside. Inter-city buses and private cars also increased towards the end of the decade.

Prior to 1960 foreign construction companies undertook the construction of buildings owned by the government such as courts and various offices. The American firm MKO built army bases in cities while the Iranian-Italian COMSACS managed contracts, the construction of bridges and roads.¹⁰⁴ In addition to the extension of welfare services, new electric generators marked a crucial point in socio-economic development. Electricity's slow expansion since the early 1950s led to new generators by the 1970s; one of the pioneers of the introduction of electricity to Kurdistan during the Premiership of Muhammad Musaddeq was General Baharmast.¹⁰⁵ Electricity was not unheard of as a letter to the constitutional *Majlis* in 1910 demonstrates, in which two Kurdish *tujjars* or businessmen seek to obtain concessions to produce and expand electricity in Kurdistan.¹⁰⁶ It only took many more decades to introduce and expand, and, like hospitals, it awaited the expansion of the army. Nevertheless, the impact of electricity was revolutionary.

¹⁰³ Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil*, 149.

¹⁰⁴ Biglari, Interview.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ See Document 161 in Sharzayi, *Asnade Baharestan*, 35-36.

Despite military and political considerations, discussed above, economic motives remained prime reasons for infrastructural projects, which accelerated the pace of socio-economic change with the effect that in the long run the state could not ignore the growing economic requirements of the region. With regard to rural areas, the movement of the military paved the way for modernisation to reach villages in a limited scale.

CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

The White Revolution which intensified the Pahlavi modernisation plans was born amid a political situation peculiar to Iran. The ideas already in circulation formed its tenets while political considerations, influenced by international and domestic economic and political developments, continued to shape its direction. In Kurdistan, land reform and infrastructural developments created a more dynamic economy, resulting in a fast pace of urbanisation. The improvement of roads and the provision of social services took place as the *extension* of the state-led modernisation, which was based on centralised development plans, thus lacking *extensive and deliberate plans to reform Iranian peripheral provinces*. Development planning in Iran matured into more comprehensive and elaborate planning by 1970, benefiting from massive oil revenue, statistical data, more sophisticated methodologies and technics as well as economic units, e.g. Economic Bureau. However, as contemporaries have noted ‘provincial development’ remained an unknown concept throughout the White Revolution.¹⁰⁷ Analysed by contemporary economists cited in this chapter, the plans suffered from discrepancies between economic sectors too. Agriculture, on which the majority of the Kurdish population depended, did not experience growth, whereas the oil and service industries continued to have the highest growth rates. Crucially, the plans’ objectives and concerns, for example as regards transportation and roads, omitted a huge portion of the Kurdish region which required feeder roads to get connected to the main stream of socio-economic transformation.

Undoubtedly the land reform was a defining moment in the transformation of socio-economic relations in the village: it damaged the oppressive regime of the Kurdish *agha* by diminishing their political and social powers. Along with the creation of more

¹⁰⁷ Biglari, Interview.

opportunities in life for the population, these were positive ramifications of land reform. However, both 'positive' and 'negative' ramifications of modernisation made sense in an ongoing institutional transformation of Kurdish society. From this perspective, modernisation also revealed serious social challenges manifest in the following trends: unprecedented migration to urban centres; the expansion of seasonal workers and unskilled labour force geographically and numerically; inadequate social provisions or absolute lack of them; sustained city-village disparity; and, finally, the unpreparedness of reforms or development plans for unforeseen consequences of their actions. Moreover, 'industrialisation' in Kurdistan was extremely limited to few production centres, confining its economy to its conventional bazaar and artisan manufacturing, though these were expanded while the construction boom absorbed a substantial portion of the labour force; the modern Kurdish working class began to form as a result of migration in search of income, urbanisation and the expansion of economy in urban centres. On the other hand, the expansion of the economy resulted in more infrastructural changes in the Kurdish region. However, political considerations also went into the construction of roads especially in the region across border. The movement of the military in the countryside led to the construction of many important inter-village or city-countryside gravel roads with the effect that welfare services followed the military into the village. This meant that the introduction of social services was not according to any specific economic or social development plan. The spontaneous and irregular pattern of the expansion of such services further vindicate the point. According to oral history, villages located on the main roads, close to cities or with a gendarmerie base could benefit from transportation, electricity or have access to medical centres, but this was extremely limited. However, the expanding population's awareness of welfare services, including healthcare, and

technology such as new means of transportation and radio, were significant aspects of social change.¹⁰⁸

Finally, the White Revolution, in general, and the land reform, in particular, triggered two crucial processes. First, it replaced the *agha* class with the state as the sole political body to have access to the means of control and violence, effectively restricting the direct access of the Kurdish *agha* to such sources. Previously, the state as an entity was either absent or an accomplice both in crimes committed by the landowner class and in the maintenance of its brutal regime. However, the stages of the land reform demonstrated a conservative approach to uprooting the regime of the *agha*. Secondly, the socio-economic consequences of the reforms along with urbanisation and infrastructural improvements signified the emergence, or intensification, of a capitalist economy, symbolised by money economy and a new class structure. As scholars have noted, the gradual replacement of a self-sufficient economy in the village by money economy manifested the extension of a nascent capitalist economic system.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the transformation of the class structure led to the emergence of a new Kurdish labour class, whose existence owed itself to an expanding class of investors and owners of capital. Therefore, the class relation was going to be incorporated in a new framework of capitalist production that was not sustained by violence, predominantly characteristic of the *agha-jutiar* economic relation, but by social contract. However, to assess the scope and pace of the institutional dimensions of change towards a framework incorporating capitalist production and industrialisation, this modernising process, as we noticed above, was both limited and prolonged.¹¹⁰ Therefore, parallel to recognising the crucial role of

¹⁰⁸ Dr Ahmad 'Azizpur, "Kurdistan and the White Revolution," interview with author, July 8, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ See Zahed, "Land Reform".

¹¹⁰ For a theoretical analysis of the institutional dimensions of modernity cf. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (UK: Polity, 1990), 55-78.

the intensifying state-led modernisation in the 1960s and 1970s, it is significant to identify social consequences of the modernising reforms in Kurdistan in both rural and urban areas.

Chapter 4: The Social Consequences of Modernisation

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter credited the White Revolution for intensifying, and in many ways triggering, the institutional transformation of Kurdish society. In this regard, the land reform and infrastructural developments were identified as parts of crucial mechanisms of the state-led modernisation in that direction. These were, however, parts of a prolonged and uneven modernisation with their own social consequences, some aspects of which this chapter highlights. In addition to evaluating the social consequences of land reform and modernisation, this chapter presents an interpretation of the following concurrent trends too: the transformation of the urban class structure, and the modernisation of education and healthcare.

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF LAND REFORM AND MODERNISATION

The land reform proved to be a prolonged and uneven process partly because of undesirable infrastructural conditions. In addition to the political factors involved in the introduction of the reform, its accomplishment was further paralysed by vast numbers of villages scattered in a geography which physically defied human movements. Therefore, the peasantry's gain from the deal depended on the location of the village and its approximation to services. Gradually, the migration of landless peasants or those with insufficient income to cities and towns increased. This was especially true in the case of those with no previous cultivating rights. This resulted in high rates of urban population increase and unbridled urbanisation. Simultaneously, insufficient land in villages and low

incomes forced a considerable number of village men to seek income in cities across Iran. Therefore, migration and seasonal labour were direct results of an inconsistent land reform which was unenthusiastically pursued by the state through various stages. On the other hand, as modernisation accelerated across Iran with oil revenues soaring after 1973, work and life in urban centres became increasingly attractive. The urban and rural income gap was the primary motivating factor, while the availability of services and the prospect of a better life also prompted village proletariats, i.e. landless peasants who only relied on their ability to engage in manual labour, to migrate to urban centres. According to a more contemporary assessment of migration to cities across Iran, the ratio of urban to rural income per head was estimated at 4.6 to 1 in 1959 and 4.7 to 1 in 1969, while official reports reveal that ‘in 1972 the average income per day from agricultural work was only \$1.40 for male and 74 cents for female laborers’.¹ Moreover, with a population of 33.5 million, Iran’s ‘urban growth rate in 1976 stood at 4.5 percent per year as against only two percent for rural areas’.²

Urbanisation and modernisation meant the transformation from a land-based to an urban-market economy and this involved processes of stratification (in general a system of inequality based on class and status) and differentiation (specialisation), setting up new institutions (for example alienable private property, contract, wage labour mediated by labour, capital, commodity, and land markets), leading to a more complex division of labour.³ From this perspective, stratification and differentiation do not connote an evolutionary progress of modernisation as certain, but influential, modernisation theorists

¹ Farhad Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution in Iran: The Migrant Poor, Urban Marginality and Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 42.

² Jahangir Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile* (Washington D. C.: Middle East Institute, 1977), 15.

³ Theorists of sociology such as Spencer and Durkheim specify differentiation as the modernising, evolutionary pattern of social change in the direction of improved material well-being of all. See Malcolm Waters, *Modern Sociological Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 320.

argued. For example, Marion J. Levy and Neil J. Smelser are among such theorists of the 1960s who, from a functionalist point of view, valued differentiation as positive and necessary for modernisation.⁴ From this perspective, ‘effective differentiation’ includes the displacement of ascriptive status ranking such as ethnicity, family, race, and gender. Levy stresses a rationalising modernisation of society in which ‘its members use inanimate sources of power and/or use tools to multiply the effects of their efforts’.⁵ Based on this, Levy articulates a modernised society’s characteristics which correspond to a highly specialised social unit.⁶ Smelser, however, ‘equates modernization with economic development’ which he defines in terms of technological-scientific and mechanical and demographic (urbanisation) shifts necessary for a transition from traditional to modern society.⁷ Both arguments are for a highly differentiated society and define differentiation and stratification as an evolutionary progress of modernisation.

In contrast to such an evolutionary view of social change, this chapter argues that modernisation in Kurdistan meant different things for different people. This is elaborated through the following four topics: *the unbridled growth of impoverished neighbourhoods; the expansion of seasonal workers; village population condemned to an undesirable rural life; and cities unplanned growth*. These topics, therefore, reveal dire social consequences of the land reform and modernisation for both the village and the city. While each theme, discussed only within the scope of this study, could individually constitute a further area of research in Kurdish and Iranian social change studies, collectively they illuminate a

⁴ Ibid., 302-05. For more on these theorists and a discussion of stratification and differentiation see *ibid.*, Ch. 9.

⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 302.

⁶ Ibid., 302-03.

⁷ Ibid., 303.

process which was far from a necessary or smooth 'transition' to a better, 'modern' way of life.

The unbridled growth of impoverished neighbourhoods

Development plans did not forestall social consequences of their plans and, in the absence of adequate social services or a social security system, poor city neighbourhoods in the outskirts of cities and towns expanded amid sordid and degrading living conditions. The existing city neighbourhoods, the growth of which was negligible prior to 1960, did not perform much better as low incomes forced common tenancy of a house by several, usually large, families, and restricted access to necessary services. The expansion of cities continued to outstrip services, including asphalt roads, electricity, sanitation, schools, and health centres, whose provisions were hindered by lack of will, resources, trained staff, and, especially as regards housing, by legal procedures. The lowest layer of the rural population, i.e. *rashaiy* or *qara* (Ku. landless peasants), spearheaded migration to such city neighbourhoods while at the same time the rural class structure began to be defined not merely by its relation to land and the *agha* but by its relation to an expanding capitalist economy.

The state responded to urbanisation by launching city projects which reflected growing pressures that stemmed from city expansion. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Plan Organisation under Ebtehaj had envisaged city development plans by assigning provinces to different foreign firms. However, the provinces' financial contributions stipulated such plans. The economic plans, which followed and formulated economic directions of the Pahlavi modernisation, totally disregarded specific plans for provinces and its actions were mostly reactions to an unplanned urbanisation.

Urbanisation and an expanding urban economy were characterised by growing bazaars that began to include both agricultural produce and factory pasteurised products as well as small artisan shops. In addition to this, a construction boom created its own market places and the economy absorbed unskilled wage labourers who consisted of recently migrated or low-income city dwellers. This unskilled urban workforce included *fa'las* (Ku. construction workers), cleaners and *hammals* (porters). Daily wage labour and *hammaliy* (delivery) especially stood out. The luckiest of those in the latter job used horse-carts or *gari* (a four-wheeled, flat trolley) to deliver items but the majority had to deliver usually heavy items long distances, on foot, and with the loads tied to their back with a special coat in return for a trivial amount of money. 'Minimum national wage', if not an unknown concept for all, was not at least in practice endorsed by any effective labour law.⁸ This was partly because the dictatorial system restricted social activities effectively, and thus the working class expanded without representative bodies. According to contemporary observers, a form of social insurance was introduced in 1339 [1960-61] in the provincial city of Sanandaj for work centres with more than three employees.⁹ Although this initiated plans to allow employees to benefit from a pension, it took a long time for social insurance to become widespread.¹⁰

⁸ Although the workers of the Abadan oil refinery had set a precedent in the 1940s, minimum wage probably remained a concept among industrial workers and was certainly not developed by any government. There were two pieces of minimum wage legislation. The 1959 Labour Law ruled minimum wage to be set every two years through a high labour council while in 1973 companies with more than 100 employees were required 'with the concurrence of labor representatives or syndicates, to prepare detailed job classifications to be used for determining employee's wages'. For this see Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 233-34; and for the first imposition of a minimum wage in Iran see Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil*, 186-7.

⁹ Biglari, Interview.

¹⁰ It can be estimated that forms of social insurance for employees to benefit from healthcare or a retirement salary in the Kurdish region were introduced by the end of the 1950s. Although with civil servant or teaching jobs came such schemes, these jobs only increased with the expansion of bureaucracy, governmental offices, and modern education since the 1950s.

Moreover, urbanisation and modernisation increased child labour (mostly young boys) in the forms of itinerant vendors of confectionary items, *shagird* (Ku. assistant), an ‘apprentice’ who, for example, was employed by a tailor or an artisan for free in return for teaching him/her the skill, and shoeshine boys/girls. The growing city created a less restricted, but hostile, environment for young village migrants and provided young city dwellers with more opportunities to earn more, however in undesirable conditions. Urban poverty created an army of working children whose social and educational lives were negatively affected due to their families’ low-income and the lack of governmental services, including leisure and sports. In such families, women, helped by young girls, undertook domestic services for better-off families. As discussed in the previous chapter, new nomenclature epitomised these types of new impoverished neighbourhoods. Before the intensification of urbanisation when such neighbourhoods were mostly known by names rooted in clans or geography, the names Porters or Sweepers referred to ‘modern’ unskilled workers. Many such quarters, for example in Mariwan city, were named after the name of a village or a region from which migration had originated. In the 1970s there were also cases in which the city engulfed nearby villages, as was the case in Bukan.

Furthermore, a crucial side effect of urbanisation was the emergence of categorisation of rural migrants as *dehati* (literary meaning coming from village) in contrast to *shari* (Ku. city dweller). While communities had been defined according to their economic activities or ethnic traits, modernisation led to categorisation based on modern concepts. For example, the rural population around Kermanshah were called Kurds while in the northern part of the Kurdish region, e.g. in Turkey and Iraq, settled Kurdish speaking communities were known as Kirmanj¹¹—historically, other signifiers

¹¹ Biglari, Interview.

have been used alongside ‘Kurd’ to distinguish between settled and nomadic ways of life until ‘Kurd’ became an ethnic marker and signifiers such as Kirmanj became a dialect. Modernisation’s categorisation of individuals developed a set of traits which became increasingly based on two concepts of *diwakawtoo* (Ku. backward) and *peshkawtoo* (Ku. advanced) with the effect that dress, accent, appearance, level of literacy, and even diet were stereotyped. Moreover, verbal, and sometimes physical, abuse of those defined as *dehati* increased with the pace of modernisation while *tahqir* (humiliation) in public spaces or in schools, mostly in forms of jokes or remarks that had strong racial connotations, became part of life for many.¹²

The expansion of seasonal workers

Alongside the urban working class, the expansion of seasonal workers was another significant consequence of the land reform and modernisation. As touched upon previously, landless peasants had always exercised seasonal work by seeking employment in other villages or regions where their labour was in demand. Work in demand included a nine-month sheep tending season, tobacco farm assistant, or servant of a landowner household. However, the land reform and the acceleration of modernisation across Iran created a class of permanent seasonal workers who left the Kurdish region in search of work in expanding cities or in factories in other parts of Iran. Seasonal work became a permanent line of work that devoured an increasing number of free labourers. Confirmed by oral history, geographically, it expanded to cover all of Iran with its urbanising cities and growing economy, creating seasonal workers who worked in factories and construction.¹³ Therefore, new seasonal workers were distinguished from

¹² Kaiwan, Interview.

¹³ Amini, Interview.

previous ones in many ways. Their numbers increased considerably; they travelled in search of work to remote cities; and worked and lived in an unsafe and culturally unknown environment. Prior to the inexorable pace of modernisation over the second half of the century, a poor Kurdish seasonal worker would generally work in a culturally familiar environment and for benevolent employers. This drastically changed when seasonal workers had to work in harsh conditions and live in groups in unfavourable circumstances. Moreover, although many travelled to cities in the neighbouring countries—Faili Kurds travelled as far as Baghdad¹⁴—seasonal workers were increasingly limited to Iran as the modernising nation-state's economy acquired its national shape.¹⁵

Seasonal work also had significant consequences for workers' families that were left behind. Because of the dearth of effective means of communication, families received remittances irregularly or had to wait until workers returned. As a result they were dependent on relatives to survive. Moreover, the misery and hardship experienced by such families, including, and perhaps especially by, women whose spouses were away, are yet to be registered in history books or reflected in social studies. However, the collective memory is not devoid of such experiences.

Family migration and family as a unit of workforce

In the same way as seasonal workers, family migration was not unprecedented. As discussed in previous chapters, the landowner-peasant economy, governed by the oppressive regime of the Kurdish *agha*, more frequently than not compelled poor peasant

¹⁴ Biglari, Interview.

¹⁵ Cross-border trade continued to defy the national economy and remained a crucial part of economic life for communities living in coterminous regions divided by national borders.

families to migrate in search of a better life while subversives were expelled from the village forcefully. Nevertheless, the destination was rarely beyond a nearby village or a village or city in a nearby region; family migration was also caused by economic factors, e.g. the loss of income, or political factors, e.g. the pressure of the landowner or intruding tribes.¹⁶

In addition to family migration to reside in urban centres, modernisation forced many other families to settle in production centres of which the brick-oven factory became well known for its harsh, inhuman conditions. Work in a brick-oven factory was based on a contract and therefore, female and male members of families and their children had to do heavy work to contribute to production in order to increase income. Because brick-oven factories were concentrated in the northern part of the Kurdish region, they embraced families more from that area, while people from the southern part were attracted to cities in south of Iran or to rice farms in the north. In a brick-oven factory, families' living space was part of the working environment and therefore their lives were tightly shackled to the factory, deprived of education, healthcare and social services. According to oral history, prior to the White Revolution, brick-oven factories did not attract anybody from the village.¹⁷ When their number increased as the result of urbanisation, more families left village in favourable seasons to reside in such factories. In comparison to life in the village where a family could still live in relatively 'better' conditions, in the brick-oven factory they lived in squalid circumstances; were paid inadequately and most of the time with delay; and lived in remote places far away from available social services. In the absence of healthcare, sanitation and education, families experienced an unhealthy and meagre diet while sources of healthy protein or vitamin became luxury products—at best

¹⁶ See Hesami, *Le Bireweriekanim*; Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*; Mukriyani, *Tarik W Run*.

¹⁷ Amini, Interview.

meat was consumed once a month.¹⁸ The brick-oven factory was a direct product of the White Revolution's land reform and unbridled urbanisation.

An undesirable rural life

Modernisation allowed landless peasants to remain in the village either as free labourers working on the land or with the cattle. The sharecroppers, *jutbanda*, who stood just above this lower class, did slightly better as their land, though still insufficient, provided a little bit security.¹⁹ It was small landowners rather than large ones that lost land as their power diminished;²⁰ good quality lands remained in the possession of wealthier landowners.

If seasonal work and family migration in search of better income situated individuals in extremely unfavourable economic and cultural circumstances, this did not mean that life in the familiar environment of the village was more rewarding. The continuity of harsh socio-economic conditions after the introduction of land reform was still prevalent. City-village disparity, discussed in the previous chapter, epitomised this continuity in many ways. Even as late as 1978 optimistic assessments of Iran's economic performance and its future planning attested to 'the existing gap between rural and urban areas (in physical facilities, income level, educational and employment opportunities, cultural advancement and political participation)', a problem supposed to be dealt with in the Sixth Plan (1978-83).²¹ The population movement, the coming of roads and provision for services to some extent, undoubtedly helped connect rural areas to urban centres which were experiencing new things. However, the best part of the Kurdish rural area was either disconnected or loosely linked to the process of change. This was because the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kaiwan, Interview.

²⁰ Mustafasultani, Interview.

²¹ Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 260.

White Revolution was an urban phenomenon which gave priority to population centres and to those projects that would create an advancing image of Iran. Regions close to main roads began to acquire rudimentary levels of some social services. However, to get access to higher levels of healthcare or educational services individuals had to travel to cities to see doctors or reside in cities to continue their education. Travelling to see doctors was both difficult and expensive and residing in cities to continue education meant that young boys had to rent their accommodation in groups and work to survive. Because of their regionality, it was especially this group that was the target of verbal and physical abuse.

Undeniably, the land reform as the centrepiece of the White Revolution marked the effective beginning of the end of both the Kurdish *agha* class and tribalism. However, this was a prolonged process which outlasted the Pahlavi regime itself. Indeed, connecting the village to the city as the centre of the process of change became an irreversible process from the early 1960s onwards. Nevertheless, state-led modernisation was accountable for the continuity of the miserable village life, the rural-urban development gap, and for the absence of specific development plans for the Kurdish region, in general, and its rural areas, in particular. Therefore, up till the political upheaval of the end of the 1970s, the socio-economic condition of the village continued to experience only limited change. Indeed, the continuity of the undesirable village life was an accompanying feature of modernisations in all countries of the region; a universal phenomenon, reflected in literary works of Gholamhosayn Saedi, Ali Ashraf Darwishyan, Hanan Al-Shaykh, Yusuf Edris, Yashar Kemal and Mahmud Tahir Lashin, and formed the themes of many movies shown on television or in rapidly popularising cinema. In Iran, however, widespread awareness of shocking rural conditions came with the 1979 Revolution.

CITIES

Modern Kurdish cities began to grow based on no specific plans. This illuminates a significant failure because, as discussed previously, there were sophisticated minds and state organisations which designed comprehensive development plans which benefited from huge oil revenues. Therefore, urbanisation could have been positively affected by such organisations. It was not necessarily the question of resources as much as the question of policy: the economic plans were centralising and general, and lacked specific provincial plans. Cities were abandoned to deal with modernisation and face its reverberations which originated from the centre. A realistic expectation of non-centralised, provincial-oriented economic plans in the context of Iran in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s is corroborated by increasingly upbeat attitudes of both the monarch and more sophisticated development plans. Therefore, the unplanned expansions of economy and society, specifically in the Kurdish region, signify a multi-layered social change affected by political consideration and the nature of the state.

Economy in conventional trade expanded but did not lead to the emergence of production centres, except for tobacco factories and Silos, nor to a coordinated economic system to utilise regional potential and benefit from the expansion of economy across Iran. The unrestrained expansion of city and economy amid infrastructural developments engaged the population of rural areas in city markets by bringing to city markets mostly homemade dairy produce while the emergence of pasteurised products created a competition for local economy. As a result, city markets swelled with increased contributions from the countryside. However, the existing economic patterns of bazaar and craft production continued to dominate city life.

The growth of cities outstripped social services; this was another significant aspect of urbanisation. Defined as an establishment responsible for conducting urban

affairs, an elected municipality was a modern notion and although its introduction originated in the expansion of modern bureaucracy in Iran since the Constitutional Revolution, it was in the 1960s and 1970s that it began to exert more influence as a new urban institution across Iran.²² In 1968-69 the new municipality law, (*qanoun-e shahrdari*) passed in 1956 and amended in 1966, was finally implemented and Tehran's was 'the first council to convene'.²³ However, the implementation of the law had no implications for Kurdish cities, and this seems to be the case across Iran. A *sharadar* (Ku. City Councillor), imported from outside the region, was appointed by an *ostandar* (provincial governor) or by a *farmandar* (regional governor) who were also non-natives.²⁴ New municipalities gradually replaced the conventional community councils which consisted of reliable and respected men of the community. Throughout the 1970s, parks and asphalt roads were created, and electricity and sanitation reached more homes. Nevertheless, a neighbourhood continued to rely on wells, public baths and mosques' toilets. It was inner parts of a city rather than the poor, shapeless districts surrounding the city that benefited from the new city council. Therefore, modernisation created, in the same way as it sustained the city-village disparity, an urban disparity between a city's neighbourhoods. The absence of a social welfare system, assumed by the new municipalities law to be the task of the new city council, allowed the continuation of formidable hurdles for the amelioration of living standards which, as mentioned above, correlated highly with the level of income eked out by individual efforts in unfavourable socio-economic conditions.

Amid the expansion of the economy and public sector, both the level of income and the type of employment were crucial factors affecting the transformation of the urban

²² Hosayn Farhūdī, "City Councils," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/city-councils-anjoman-e-sahr-in-persia>, accessed 27 August 2017.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Kaiwan, Interview.

class structure. The expansion of trade enriched both non-bazaari and bazaari merchants and enabled them to invest and expand trade. In addition to the capital invested in the bazaar, construction contractors accumulated capital in the booming construction economy. On the other hand, the nature of construction as a labour-, rather than a capital-intensive economy led to employing an army of unskilled or semi-skilled free-moving labourers who became an important part of the new Kurdish working class. The construction economy's impact was huge for it created a wide network of other trades around it. Another section of society therefore benefited from the construction boom and their levels of income increased. However, the expanding economy remained within the existing modes of trade and did not enter a phase of 'industrialisation' to promote the industrial potential of the region. Moreover, the level of income determined the level of access to technological or cultural products.

Simultaneously, the expansion of the public sector created new employment, which was distinguished not only by the provision of regular salaries, but also for its access to cultural innovations. Public education and healthcare stand out as two prominent public areas. Working in education or healthcare increased family incomes and transformed the family culturally too. In this way increased income and access to the means of cultural consumption and production distinguished another section of society from those whose low level of income restricted their access especially to technological but also to cultural products. Therefore, a Kurdish 'middle class' emerged as a result of the expansion of economy and public sector. Whereas many could be identified as *sarmayedar* (Ku. one with capital) towards the end of the 1970s, a 'capitalist class' engaged in the organisation of an industrial economic system did not exist. By the same token, 'bourgeoisie' developed as a notion referring to a cultural way of life rather than a specific class.

However, the middle class in question was divided into lower and upper levels, distinguished by their possession of alienable or inalienable wealth and income, while its members' 'class consciousness' was probably restricted to an awareness of their materialistic wellbeing and cultural differences. Women's place in both private and public spheres functioned as another significant distinction for the 'middle class' wherein women had potentially more access to socio-economic or cultural innovations and worked to gain a degree of economic independence, becoming empowered in the process. This new image of Kurdish womanhood applied to the new generation of women that emerged from the 1960s. Nevertheless, the modernising institutions, especially education, affected (mostly urban) women in low-income families, by enabling them to enter employment. Finally, it is more productive to refrain from superficially creating 'antagonistic classes' and instead to concentrate on what it meant for Kurdish society to have such a middle class emerged amid socio-economic transformations. As an expanding 'class', it contributed to social change in many ways, as will become evident throughout this study.

EDUCATION

Discussed in chapter two, the modernisation of Iran since the early decades of the twentieth century yielded an educated, urban generation in Kurdistan increasingly independent of its tribal society. By the end of the 1970s, we witness the emergence of a formidable urban, educated generation, which resulted from the intensification of modernisation since the end of the 1950s. Although this generation was the product of modern education, they played a crucial role in expanding modern education into urban, but especially, rural centres and can be credited for attempting to promote social, cultural and political awareness in urban and rural populations. For the intellectuals of the age of

‘modernity’, education was the new nation’s vehicle of progress and its aim was to eradicate illiteracy in Iran, as Taqizadeh claimed (see Part I), a ‘sacred goal’ which had been pursued by intellectuals since the Constitutional Revolution. Although eradicating illiteracy was a monumental task for the modern nation-state of Iran, the result was by no means negligible by the end of the 1970s.²⁵ However, there are two points to be made. First, the expansion of modern education, like many other modernising institutions, took place in a changing socio-political context in which not only the state but an educated generation was needed for its expansion. Modern education was not essentially a ‘humanitarian’ effort to help lift ‘traditional’ societies out of poverty but it was crucial to the future prosperity of the ‘nation’ in the way the state desired. Secondly, the new state was ethnically a homogenising polity and its educational policies were aimed at Persianisation of the culture. Therefore, resistance against the nationalisation of education was also reflected in the efforts of the Kurdish educated urban groups who were involved in expanding literacy and imparting social and historical awareness to the people. These two points help us to identify more contributors in the struggle to eradicate illiteracy since the Constitutional Revolution, on the one hand, and to promote a critical reading of the state’s modern education that distinguishes literacy as ability to rote skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, and literacy as the ability to acquire knowledge critically. By the 1970s, Iran’s education system had become an instrument to form the ‘new Iranian’, as the state became more authoritarian and was inspired by more radical nationalist agendas.

Education: 1920-1960

²⁵ See Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*; Ashraf, "General Survey of Modern Education"; Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran* Ch. 3.

A considerable number of Kurdistan Province's Education Office documents, which had been abandoned in cellars or awaited shredding, were saved for posterity by tenacious efforts of Sayyed Abdolhamid Hayrat Sajjadi. Published in Persian under the title *The History of Education in Kurdistan (1941-1979)*, the book provides important data, which along with information published by the Education Ministry's journal of *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh* (Pe. education), form valuable source materials for further analysis of education in this period in Iran, in general, and in the Kurdish region, in particular. Distinguished also for its inclusion of female teachers and headteachers who formed a crucial part of the education system throughout the Kurdish region, the documents in *The History* identify 50 educational centres in the province between 1941 and 1946, many of which are in rural areas, attesting to continuous educational efforts since the early century.²⁶ However, the number is higher if we add schools in the Kurdish cities excluded from the province because of Iran's administrative divisions. The share of the provincial city of Sanandaj was 14 which increased to more than 60 in two decades.²⁷ As Figure 17 shows, bigger cities also acquired secondary schools.²⁸ By the mid-1950s the growth was more impressive as the number of both primary and secondary schools, the number of students, and the proportion of girls in education had grown considerably since the late 1930s;²⁹ this included an increase in the number of female teachers and headteachers (see Figure 16). Therefore, although efforts to expand modern education by 1940s had been impressive, the period in the aftermath of WWII stands out because of a profound change in the educational structure of Kurdish society.

²⁶ Abdolhamid Heyrat Sajjadi, *Pishineye Amuzesh Wa Parvaresh Dar Kurdistan (1320-1357)* [The History of Education in Kurdistan (1941-1957)], Vol. 2 & 3 (Sanandaj: Kurdistan Publications, 2004), 330.

²⁷ Ibid., 343-46.

²⁸ See *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, No. 5, Mordad 1321 [Jul-Aug 1939], 70.

²⁹ See *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Farvardin 1335 [Mar-Apr 1956].

However, the performance of growing Kurdish cities such as Sanandaj, Mahabad and Saqqez was average or below average compared to educational statistics for all provinces in this period.³⁰ Constant administrative divisions, the exclusion of other smaller Kurdish cities now allocated to other provinces, and undermining the educational performance of a city, for example, such as that of Baneh, which was evaluated with that of Saqqez, hindered educational statistics from the Kurdish region. Moreover, avoiding small numbers, as Baneh seemed to have only between one and two primary schools, probably served to create an image of constant and satisfying growth of modern education.³¹ In this regard, documents in Sajjadi's book cast light upon the state of education in this city which by 1960 had acquired 12 primary schools and one secondary school, albeit with very limited classes for their 945 students.³² Quantitative changes do not conceal educational deficiencies also in this case where in addition to lack of sufficient classes there was a shortage of trained teachers. With a population of around 15,000 Baneh city's secondary school for boys in 1968 did not have any teacher to teach experimental sciences. Students travelled to Sanandaj, the provincial centre, to demand more teachers.³³

By the end of the 1950s, only Sanandaj, like other non-Kurdish provincial centres in Iran, acquired *Daneshsara* or training colleges for teachers and nurses, while other growing cities were left out because they were not provincial centres or because they were administered by another province, as was the case with Mahabad in the Fourth Province (later West Azerbaijan Province).³⁴

³⁰ Cf. *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Dey 1335 [Dec. 1957-Jan. 1958].

³¹ Cf. *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Khordad 1336 [May-Jun 1957].

³² Sajjadi, *Pishineye Amuzesh Wa Parvaresh*, V. 2 & 3, 209.

³³ 'Azizpur, Interview.

³⁴ *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Khordad 1336 [May-Jun 1957], 71. In this year there were 12 provinces in Iran.

Moreover, parallel to impressive quantitative changes, Iran's education system continued to experience changes in the way education and its role was conceived. The Education Ministry's journal published in this period reveals many aspects of this qualitative change. As part of the process of linguistic simplification and purification in Iran, the term 'amuzesh va parvaresh' replaced 'ta'lim va tarbiyat', an Arabic-derived title, in 1317 [1938], in an intellectual and governmental attempt to create new vocabularies compatible with the new state and its requirements. In 1925 the Ministry of Education began to publish *Ta'lim wa Tarbiyat* to promulgate modern education. Although political crises and the lack of enthusiasm interrupted its publication—it was postponed for five years from March 1929—its first issues contained enlightening, educational articles as well as educational statistics.³⁵ By 1938, these aspects had already been diminished as eulogising articles on the Shah and his son, Muhammad Reza, along with their photographs, emerged more frequently. Moreover, although the school curriculum became more cohesive and began to contain a variety of scientific subjects, patriotism, kingship and a homogenising, national Iranian history were increasingly emphasised. The most effective instruments to inculcate such ideas were Persian language and Persian literature; all other languages and literatures of Iran were absolutely neglected in favour of Persian studies. As a result of the changing political contexts, the journal and its diverse contributors vacillated between an educational, critical journal and one under the shadow of the ruling Shah. In the aftermath of the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, the Education Ministry issued a new law for universal and compulsory education. It lamented that in spite of 'thirty-five years since the Constitution's [introduction of] compulsory education, unfortunately [universal and compulsory education] has still

³⁵ For a brief background of the journal see *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Mehr 1327 [Sep.-Oct. 1948].

remained a dream'.³⁶ Even by the end of the 1950s, reporting to the UNESCO's international congress, a contributor warned that 'no country was supposed to use schools as means to promulgate radical nationalism'.³⁷ Made possible by its various contributors, *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* published articles which presented critical assessments of Iran's education system. As an illustration of this, the ineffectiveness of both one-way teacher-student teaching (*naqli*) and the method of learning by heart (*hefzi*) were addressed.³⁸ Equally interesting, poverty was linked to learning at schools;³⁹ and a history of education in Iran drew attention to the continuance of corporal punishment and detrimental educational environments in the previous fifty years.⁴⁰ Furthermore, research conducted to assess education in rural areas featured in many issues of the journal,⁴¹ while the publication of educational books, including comparative studies, increased.⁴²

The existence of such critical assessments of the educational system demonstrated the presence of a diverse, educated generation determined to affect social change. *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* remained a battleground for the clash of dictatorial and democratic educational ideas. However, in general the journal and its contributors maintained a philosophical and historical approach to education hinged on Persian language and literature with the effect that the conspicuous dearth of other literatures lingered on while the curriculum continued to ignore the cultural diversity of Iran.⁴³ Language had become an indispensable component alongside historiography to reinforce a national image of

³⁶ *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 12, No. 8-11, Aban-Azar 1321 [Oct. 1942-Feb. 1943], p. b.

³⁷ *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Mehr 1335 [Sep.-Oct. 1956].

³⁸ See *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 29, No. 10, Tir 1337 [Jun. Jul. 1958], p. 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, No. 9, Azar 1323 [Aug.-Dec. 1950], 469.

⁴¹ Cf. *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, *ibid.*, No. 5, Mordad 1323 [Jul.-Aug. 1944], 271; *ibid.*, No. 6, Shahrivar 1323 [Aug.Sep. 1944], 324-29; No. 9, Azar 1323 [Nov.-Dec. 1944], 469.

⁴² Cf. a translation of a work on education in rural areas which draws lessons from 'new and democratic education in the U.S.A'. For this see *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 15, 1324 [1945-6].

⁴³ Cf. *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 12, No. 1 and 2, Farvardin-Ordibehesh 1321 [Apr.-Jun. 1942].

Iran with the effect that the promotion of Persian was even more consciously pursued from the 1950s onwards. For example, in one of its issues towards the late 1950s, the journal lamented the deterioration of the quality of the ‘sweet’ Persian language and listed a number of requirements to tackle that overriding problem, one of which was ‘the prevention of teaching foreign languages (*zabanhaye biganeh*) [i.e. other Iranian languages spoken in Iran] in kindergartens and primary schools.⁴⁴ A decade later, despite educational and critical articles, the journal continued to identify itself increasingly along national lines. A contributor to one of its 1965 issues stated that

Another big goal of the educators [in teaching Persian] is a national goal. In this age especially when our country has entered a new historical epoch, this goal should be seen as an overriding goal in [teaching] Persian language. Because in the current age, the biggest wish of humanity is to achieve a high status [...] [and] therefore from plurality to unity or from nationalism to the oneness of humanity and brotherhood of nations is [generally] considered the best logical and scientific way [to achieve that status].⁴⁵

Such intensified linguistic efforts and radicalised perceptions were clear manifestations of an intimate relation between an inexorable state-led modernisation and the process of nation-building.

Moreover, by extolling the ancient, pre-Islamic Iran, the journal also became a platform to reinvent ancient traditions such as Mehregan, Nowruz, and Sadeh, a mythical ancient Iranian fire festival, to ‘safeguard *qaumiyat* and *melliyat* [Pe. ethnicity and

⁴⁴ *Amuzesh va Parvareh*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Bahman 1337 [Jan.-Feb. 1959], 61-63.

⁴⁵ Gonabadi Mohammad Parvin, "Amuzeshe Zabane Farsi Va Hadafe Tarbiyatie An," [Teaching Persian Language and Its Educational Aim], *Amuzesh wa Parvareh* 35, No. 9 and 10 (1344 [1965]).

nationality]' of Iran.⁴⁶ The journal reflected the way modern education in Iran was expanding, however, by the middle of the 1970s, it was the development of the mass media, especially television and cinema, which elevated Persian to an unprecedented cultural status.

In contrast to significant educational progress in urban centres, the advance of literacy in peripheral, and dominantly rural, regions like Kurdistan was curtailed by a weak infrastructure, the remoteness of the village, and also by educational decrees which stipulated the existence of 'enough' students to form primary and secondary schools.⁴⁷ Moreover, the absence of an adequate number of teacher training colleges in Kurdish cities except Sanandaj, let alone universities and other institutions of higher education, affected education in Kurdistan negatively. This remained the case towards the end of the 1970s.

⁴⁶ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 30, No. 8, Khordad 1338 [May-June 1959]; and *ibid.*, No. 9, Tir 1338 [Jun.-Jul. 1959].

⁴⁷ *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, No. 11 and 12, Bahman and Esfand 1323 [Jan.-Feb. 1945].

16. Education centres and the number of female teachers in the Kurdistan Province.

All Educational Centres: 1320-25 [1941-46)	Educational Centres in Sanandaj 1320-25 [1941-46)	Educational Centres in Sanandaj 1352-53 [1973-74]
50	14	62
Female Headteachers in Sanandaj 1352-53 [1973-74]	Female Teachers in 9 Primary Schools in Sanandaj 1349-50 [1970-71]	
27	82	

Source: Sayyed Abdolhamid Heyrat Sajjadi, *Pishineye Amuzesh wa Parvaresh in Kurdistan* [the History of Education in Kurdistan] (Sanandaj: Kurdistan Publications, 2004), 330 and 343-46.

17. Primary and secondary schools in some Kurdish cities (1955).

City	Schools				Students				Teachers	Dabir (secondary teacher)
	Primary		Secondary		Primary		Secondary			
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private		
Sanandaj	68	2	5	1	4,629	296	708	22	255	42
Saqqez	26	-	3	-	1,554	-	233	-	87	16
Mahabad	58	-	5	-	3,359	-	595			
					Boys: 2,657 Girls: 702		Boys: 488 Girls: 107			

In 1955, Sanandaj and Saqqez were parts of the Kermanshah Province while Mahabad was in the Rezayie Province. Based on the number of students in Mahabad, the ratio of girls to boys is 1 to 3.

Sources: *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, No. 3, Mehr 1335 [Sep. 1955]; *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, No. 4, Dey 1335 [Dec. 1957].

18. Primary and Secondary schools in Iran (1955).

Primary Schools	Girls	Boys
Public	6,245	221,723
Private	359	528,734
Total	6,604	821,337

Source: *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Farvardin 1335 [Mar-Apr. 1956].

Secondary Schools	Public	Private	Total
Girls	153	35	188
Boys	466	72	726
Students			142,751
	Girls	25,706	8,520
	Boys	89,814	18,711

Source: *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Farvardin 1335 [Mar-Apr. 1956].

Education: 1963-1979

The 1960s and 1970s were distinguished from previous periods by the growing availability of more precise statistics which made possible a better view of educational conditions of Iran. According to later statistics, in 1966 from a school age (7+years) population of less than 19 million only 29.4 percent were literate.⁴⁸ In urban areas, where more people lived, this number was almost 60 percent; and there were twice as much literate men than women.⁴⁹ Therefore, in the early 1960s illiteracy still constituted a major issue for Iran. Under pressure to tackle this the state began to present new methods and invest more in education with the effect that educational conditions improved on a yearly basis. For example, in 1968 the rate of literacy rose to 33.4 percent among a school age population of almost 22 million, rising again in 1972 to 36.7 percent among a growing school age (6+years) population of more than 22 million in 1972.⁵⁰

The educational image of the Kurdish region changed radically in this period when the number of both primary and secondary schools increased and more people attended schools. Mixed secondary schools had been established in bigger Kurdish cities by the end of the 1930s, though in smaller towns schools either came late or were only available to boys. Except for establishing teacher or nurse training colleges in the provincial centres, founding universities were not on the agenda and school graduates had to travel to cities outside of their region, usually to Tehran or Tabriz to acquire higher education. Furthermore, parallel to both infrastructural improvements and new educational policies, more villages acquired teachers who in many cases began teaching in the absence of school facilities. New educational methods and investments were outcomes

⁴⁸ Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 62.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

of both the pressure from below and authority of the state which embraced a set of reforms incorporated into the White Revolution. Therefore, the interaction of many forces led to the intensification of educational reforms that took place in a changing socio-political context.

One of the most significant educational developments in Iran was the introduction of the Literacy Corps in the end of 1962. Explaining the new Literacy Corps in a speech in 1963, the Minister of Education, Parviz Khanlari, informed his audience that despite educational achievements, from a population of '20 or 21 million only few were literate nineteen years after the passing of the Compulsory [and Free] Education Law'.⁵¹ The Shah too, agreeing with this bleak picture, claimed that 80 percent of the population was illiterate.⁵² 'Even by the end of the [current] twenty-year plan', Khanlari maintained, 'there will still be twelve million illiterates in Iran'.⁵³ Therefore, he argued, it was for this reason that the Literacy Corps was presented as an effective alternative to such a plan. It had been formed in the previous autumn and like many other ideas it had been initiated before the announcement of the White Revolution by the Shah. However, it was hailed as the achievement of the monarch. While the ideas had been hatched in intellectual circles by likes of Khanlari for whom this was a new dawn in the battle against illiteracy, *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* embellished its first page by the message of the Shah who announced the start of a 'sacred battle' and a 'national holy war' to

⁵¹ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Esfand 1341 [Feb.-Mar. 1963], 10. For this law see *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 12, No. 8-11, Aban-Bahman 1321 [Jan. 1943], Alef [A]. UNESCO estimated the number of illiterates in Iran to be more than 20 million or 75 percent of the population.

⁵² See the Shah's message in *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Esfand 1341 [Feb.-Mar. 1963].

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12. This plan was divided into four parts the first of which had been included in the five-year economic plan. See *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 11.

eradicate illiteracy, thus expropriating the idea as his and labelling the action as his '*fatwa*' or decree.⁵⁴

The Literacy Corps consisted of new school graduates who were assigned to villages across Iran and their tasks also included giving advice on other issues such as health and infrastructure.⁵⁵ According to contemporary observers, in the early 1960s the Literacy Corps consisted of mostly Persian speaking young graduates who were scattered across the Kurdish region.⁵⁶ Their impact cannot be disputed, however, the quantity of villages, the poor quality of roads and lack of facilities restrained the impact of education on rural areas. Moreover, linguistic barriers and in most cases probably the lack of motivation among the corps hindered the expansion of modern education,⁵⁷ whereas undertaking other tasks, e.g. providing advice on social or health issues, depended on individuals' political and social proclivities or dispositions and was not necessarily part of the job.⁵⁸ According to oral history, the way individuals' intellectual dispositions and practice were shaped was conditioned on their contact with the literature of the time which included examples of similar actions in other parts of the region, e.g. the writings of Nayef Hawatmeh, the Marxist Palestinian leader, and with ideas which encouraged closer contact with the masses.⁵⁹

In parallel to the Literacy Corps, there were native teachers who were allocated to villages to teach and gain experience before being employed in urban schools. Upon graduation from *daneshsara* (teacher training college), a graduate had to undertake a

⁵⁴ *Amuzesh va Parvareh*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Esfand 1341 [Feb.-Mar. 1963].

⁵⁵ *Amuzesh va Parvareh*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 60.

⁵⁶ Kaiwan, Interview.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Biglari, Interview.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

five-year teaching job in a village.⁶⁰ Villages were not popular career destinations for teachers. However, inspired by progressive and philanthropic ideas of the time ‘teaching in a village became a vogue for the educated, urban generation’ in a changing political context.⁶¹ For the growing popularity of such very ideas (see the next chapter) many chose teaching ‘as a way to promote social and political awareness of *toodeha* [the masses]’.⁶² Indeed, the increase in the number of social and political activists and the formation of what it assumed to be a network of such activists proved to be indispensable for the transformation of the educational image of Kurdish society. A successful doctor rising from a poor background in the city of Baneh recalls that

My education could have been terminated after 6 years if it was not for a group of political and social activists in my home town. For example, Hashim Karimi, ‘Abdulla Eqdami and Muhammad Qaderyan were educated individuals who were influenced by Kurdish cultural products and movements, valued education and imparted social, ethnic and political ideas of the time. In the absence of state institutions in this regard, they encouraged me to continue studying and although I suffered from the lack of adequate income and had to work at the same time, I nonetheless continued my education and, after passing *Konkur* (Iranian university entrance exam), I was among the 220 students, which was the limit, admitted to Tehran University’s Medical Faculty in 1969.⁶³

This example attests to the significant impact of such activists’ social and educational work. Therefore, both the expansion of literacy and the increase in the number of people

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Kaiwan, Interview.

⁶² Ibid. Biglari, Interview.

⁶³ ‘Azizpur, Interview.

in higher education was owed to the intersection of many factors, namely the authority of the state to establish new schools and introduce new methods, and a new educated, urban generation, whose actions were shaped in changing social, political as well as ideological contexts—these contexts were domestic, regional as well as international. In many cases, the demand and financial contribution of landowners who were engaged in literacy activities or were culturally receptive to modern ideas induced the authorities to establish schools in their villages. The existence of an educated, urban generation, moulded by influential ideas and formed into various networks, exposed the limit of the state-led modernisation and the vitality of non-state agents of change as regards the expansion of modern education, a crucial point entirely ignored in modernisation theories (see diagrams in Chapter 2). Max Weber explains such actions on behalf of individuals as ‘value-oriented’—a type of social action ‘determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior’.⁶⁴ However, in contrast to Weber’s observation that action of this kind occurred ‘for the most part only to a relatively slight extent’, across Iran in general and in the period under discussion, ‘value-oriented’ actions characterised an urban, educated generation that contributed immensely to social change.⁶⁵ In a progressive perception of history, which guided activists during these decades, education was indeed an indispensable social value to fight for. It was through access to education that many were able to rise from poor socio-economic conditions.⁶⁶

Another aspect of modern education, which exposed the limits of the state action, was its unequal and prolonged nature. The following data elucidates this point: in April

⁶⁴ Weber, *Economy and Society*, 24-25.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁶ ‘Azizpur, Interview.

1963 there were only 32 literacy corps in Kurdistan.⁶⁷ Teacher training included women too, though their number was still low, and in 1963 from 14 applicants 9 were admitted.⁶⁸ According to Muhammad Sadeq Sheikhestani, the incumbent deputy director of the Statistical Centre of Iran, ‘in the academic year 1341-2 [1962-3] from 1,720,000 primary school students across Iran only 39 percent (apart from [those taught by] the Literacy Corps) [were] village students, while three-fourth of the population live[d] in rural areas’.⁶⁹ In the same academic year, *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* informed its readers that the number of primary students across Iran was increasing with different paces in different regions, ‘leading to considerable disparity between provinces’. As an illustration of this, in 1964 from the above total number of primary school students, the Fars Province’s share was 14.5 percent while the Kurdistan Province’s share was 4 percent.⁷⁰ Since the latter did not include all Kurdish cities, the share of the Kurdish region was probably slightly higher.⁷¹ Educational disparities surrounding gender were other aspects of education. In the same year, across Iran the share of girls was 30 percent,⁷² and, based on the difficulties of modern education to reach the peripheral regions in general and the countryside in particular, and also affected by cultural barriers, the number of girls in education especially in rural areas remained much lower than boys.

According to statistics, the number of primary and secondary schools began to increase throughout the 1960s. In 1964 there were 420 primary schools against 18

⁶⁷ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, No. 3 (Ordibehesht 1342 [Apr.-May 1963]), 60.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, “Amare Farhangi [Educational Statistics], Vol. 34, No. 1, 53.

⁷⁰ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 34, No.1, 52-3, Farvardin 1343 [1964].

⁷¹ With an area of 25, 000 sq. km., the Kurdistan province in 1972 consisted of 6 counties (*shahrestan*), 16 districts (*bakhsh*), 8 *shahredaris* (city councils), and 49 *dehestan* (rural centres), thus excluding a considerable part of the Kurdish region in the west of Iran. for this see Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 2.

⁷² *Ibid.*

secondary schools in the Kurdistan Province.⁷³ A yearly increase in the number of students was recorded in the next issues of *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* which continued its publication regularly, although the appearance of the images of the Shah, his patriarchal messages, as well as eulogising pieces on the monarch (on his new calendar and on performed reinvented traditions) increased to the detriment of intellectual and educational articles of the journal's earlier periods. Diverse both in subject and in philosophical persuasion, one interesting aspect of the journal had been to recognise the individual efforts of men as well as women in the struggle against illiteracy. For example, 'Aziz Al-Muluk Ma'refat (Mo'temedi), was a Kurdish teacher from Sanandaj, whose teaching career and efforts to build schools for girls earned her, like many other pioneers across Iran, a deserved reputation among her contemporaries.⁷⁴ She taught in Sanandaj and founded *Namus* [honour] School for Girls in Hamadan before accepting a headteacher role in Kermanshah's Shahdokht Primary School for Girls. She then continued working in education after her retirement in 1963 and was assigned the role of *bazras* (Pe. inspector) in Tehran.⁷⁵ The name *Namus*, which has protectionist connotations in relation to women, perfectly reflected the existing gender order of the society in which a brave individual like her not only had to fight illiteracy but also appease a hostile, patriarchal environment. Such individuals set the stage for a later, more educated urban generation, including women, that became a distinguished feature of the era of the White Revolution.

According to official statistics, throughout the 1970s the number of primary and secondary schools in Kurdish urban areas continued to rise with the effect that between 1966 and 1974 the number of elementary schools increased from 393 to 597 schools.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, No. 2 (Ordibehesht 1343 [Apr. May 1964], 61-2.

⁷⁴ See *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 37, Nos. 7 and 8 (1346 [1967]), 116.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷⁶ Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 66.

Without specifying their urban or rural locations, available statistics claimed that these numbers for Literacy Corps elementary schools were 330 and 609 respectively;⁷⁷ enrolment in such schools increased from 8,000 to 15,000 pupils in this decade.⁷⁸ This data, whether inflated or even complete, generally illustrates a picture that demonstrates both the impressive growth of modern schools and the rate of literacy. Official statistics claimed that while in March 1966 only 52 children attended kindergartens in the Kurdistan province, this number rose to 793 in March 1974.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the expansion of modern education did not include universities, the absence of which outlasted the Pahlavi rule itself. This was caused not only by the shortage of staff and high rate of illiteracy but also by the state's lack of will and plans. Therefore, in pursuit of higher education, school graduates continued to enrol in universities outside Kurdistan. As their number grew in the 1960s and 1970s, this resulted especially in the formation of more networks of Kurdish social and political activists (see the next chapter).

Finally, at the end of 1965 the role of television in education was discussed in *Amuzesh va Parvaresh* in search of more effective, coordinated educational methods by rather ambiguously comparing 'centralised methods' used in France and Switzerland with 'decentralised methods' used in England.⁸⁰ This demonstrated the increasing significance of television in people's lives in Iran. However, despite such intellectual and educational debates, television became an effective tool for the concentration of political power and the homogenisation of culture by the mid-1970s.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁸⁰ *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 35, No. 6 (Azar 1344 [Dec.-Jan. 1965]), 14-16.

19. Aziz Muluk Ma'refat (Mo'tamedi).



Source: *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 37. Nos. 7 & 8 (1346 [1967]), 116.

The text in the background reads 'Lady Ma'refat in a Struggle Against Illiteracy Class in Tehran Laleh Primary School'.

20. Institutions of Education in the Kurdistan Province

Institutions	1346-7 [1967-8]	Enrolment	1352-3 [1973-4]	Enrolment
Elementary School	393	27,000	597	47,000
Literacy Corps elementary school	330	8,000	609	15,000
Secondary Schools	22	6,000	22	8,000
Technical and vocational schools	1	75	6	682
Normal and teaching training schools	4	23	3	455
University	0		0	

Source: Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*.

HEALTHCARE

This section discusses a number of important themes as regards modern healthcare. They include the impact of modern healthcare on Kurdish society; the role of the state but also its limits and shortcomings; and the role of non-state agents of change. The expansion of healthcare institutions in Kurdish urban centres was another significant aspect of social change in the era of the White Revolution. By the end of the 1970s more people had access to medical treatments such as immunisation, medical information and advice. Parallel to this, the number of nurses and (foreign or native) doctors increased. As was the case with the expansion of literacy and schools, healthcare went through a prolonged and uneven process of change, but at a much faster pace and with considerable quantitative results. Healthcare was an urban phenomenon that needed time to become an ingrained institution in a society that was mainly rural and had continued to suffer from the absence of social services. Later, improved statistical data demonstrates the appalling medical conditions faced by earlier (mostly rural) populations and reveals a slow expansion of medical services. Therefore, with a growing awareness of medical issues, this process gradually engaged the educated urban generation.

Modern healthcare advanced throughout the 1970s amid unhealthy environments and prevalent diseases especially in rural areas. Urban centres benefited more from sanitation, hygienisation and the expansion of health centres, though not all the neighbourhoods were affected equally. Most villages continued to live in an unhealthy environment. In the second half of the century health conditions in the Kurdish region were still appalling. This applied more acutely to peripheral regions and rural areas across Iran. In the 1950s or 1960s there were no health centres in rural areas in the Kurdish region while its towns and cities only had limited access to health and medical services. Death rates and infant mortality were high while ratios of physicians and hospital beds to

population demonstrated the scarcity of doctors and hospitals.⁸¹ As the next two figures demonstrate, by the mid-1970s these conditions improved considerably in comparison with earlier periods.⁸² The movement to ameliorate these conditions continued to face serious obstacles in a situation which ‘many villagers never benefit[ed] from medical science from cradle to grave’.⁸³ According to oral history, across the rural areas in the Kurdish region ‘lice, swollen eyes, coughing, sloughy wounds, and leprosy in many villages, were prevalent’.⁸⁴ People affected by leprosy faced extra challenges to make a living, and though they were not completely excluded from the community life and were helped by co-villagers, they nonetheless experienced social isolation. Moreover, the region was still characterised by the absence of *hamam* (bath house/room) and toilets. For example, ‘except in a landowner’s house, in 1352 [1973] there were no private or public toilet to be used by people in Jalalvand and Osmanvand regions in the vicinity of Kermanshah’ while people continued to rely on other unhygienic ways.⁸⁵ Common characteristics of Kurdish villages included the dearth of electricity, potable water, and sanitary sewers—there were usually no suitable toilets or baths—which kept the level of disease high. Moreover, animal manure was shaped into *koshkalan* (Ku. dried dungs heaped upon each other), located in front of the house to be used as fuel, becoming a haven for disease transmitting insects; domestic animals were kept in *gawir* (Ku. stable) which was a part of the inner space of the house. Immunisation was unknown and consequently measles and chickenpox were endemic and continued to kill or infect

⁸¹ Akbar Moarefi, "Behdāštbarā-Ye Hama," [Health for All] in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/behdast-bara-ye-hama>, accessed 02 August 2017.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ B. Alen, "Behdashte Rustayi," [Rural Healthcare], *Amuzesh va Parvaresh*, Vol. 14, No. 5 (Mordad 1332 [July 1953]), 274.

⁸⁴ Mustafasultani, Interview.

⁸⁵ Biglari, Interview.

individuals' lungs and brains or affect eyesight; the death toll was tens or hundreds of people annually.⁸⁶ Moreover, contact with animals and animal waste kept tetanus disease high while unhygienic washing materials, e.g. *dimashora* (solid white substance made of animal produce), spread microbes. Moreover, the lack of durables such as refrigerators and freezers left people with no way to store food.

In urban centres, too, 'low standards of sanitation and contact with hazards of waste contributed to the spread of cholera and typhoid, usually leading to an epidemic in summers'.⁸⁷ A shocking aspect of life in urban areas in the 1960s was the absence of a sanitary sewer system. A small town like Baneh epitomised this: within the city 'open channels carried sewage through the residential areas, ending up in nearby lands under cultivation'.⁸⁸ Cholera was a lethal disease in such towns where, until the end of the 1950s, people still died of rabies.⁸⁹ Public awareness of health issues was at its lowest level while doctors and pharmacies with an adequate supply of medicine were rare, and advanced laboratories were unheard of. At the same time, people did not necessarily trust modern medical practices and therefore continued to use conventional methods.⁹⁰ These conditions in more populous cities were only slightly better. People continued to use public baths, mostly *khazineh* (pool), washing in a shared pool, although in most cases new public baths with shower rooms replaced them by the end of the 1970s. Private baths in households were a new urban concept only used by the wealthy. However, visiting public baths in days of celebration also carried with it some cultural meanings. For

⁸⁶ 'Azizpur, Interview. According to Azizpour, local experts used conventional methods to 'immunise' against smallpox by having the patient make early contact with the virus.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

example, the act of visiting public baths as a family on New Year's Eve or on religious days was a custom to welcome such important days.

21. Iran's Healthcare indicators for 1923 and 1976.

Indicator	1302 Š./1923	1355 Š./1976
Crude death rate (per 1,000)	22	8.5
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	250	40
Child mortality (0-5 age) (as percent of total deaths)	50%	25%
Death from communicable diseases (as percent of total deaths)	60%	10%
Deaths from smallpox (in non-pandemic years)	270	none
Cases of malaria (annual in Iran)	1 mill	12,000
Sanitary water supply coverage: country	none	50%
urban	none	85%
Ratio of physician/population (Tehran)	1/11,000	1/2,150 (country)
Ratio of hospital beds/population (Iran)	1/11,000	1.5/1,000 (country)

Source: *Simā-ye behdāštī wa dārmān dar Īrān and Īrān, rāh-i now barā-ye tandarostī*

Source: quoted in Mohammad Ali Faghih, "Behdārī".

22. Healthcare facilities in Iran (1978).

Hospitals	503
Hospital beds	48,850
Rural health units	1,550
Health corps units	450
Urban dispensaries	2,245
Health centers	564
Mother and child health centers	150
Diagnostic laboratories	638
School health units	151 ^a

(a) covering an estimated 5 mill pupils.

Source: *Simā-ye behdāštī wa dārmān dar Īrān and Īrān, rāh-i now barā-ye tandarostī*

Source: quoted in Mohammad Ali Faghih, "Behdārī".

Healthcare: its pace and scope of change

The health conditions, discussed above, were radically transformed throughout the 1970s but more in Kurdish urban rather than rural areas. This was another factor which further consolidated the disparity between city and village. Despite the emergence of a more organised and effective healthcare system, including its various training organisations, it

was outstripped by health-related demands of a rising population. The states' shortcomings in this regard emanated from a late emergence of effective methods to expand the healthcare system. The introduction of the concept of such a system was one of the basic objectives of Iran's Fifth Development Plan (1973-), which was followed by a social security system (*bime-ye ejtema'i*), introduced in 1975. Accordingly, in addition to a central apparatus, which included many directories, the Ministry of Health introduced various departments to improve healthcare at a peripheral level. For example, general departments of health (*edara-ye koll-e behdasht*), departments of health headed by county health commissioners, and district health centres headed by medical officers were assigned to function in Iran's 23 provinces. This took place in the mid-1970s, however, merely increasing institutions did not necessarily yield quick results. Health conditions in many Kurdish rural areas in the end of the 1970s were either as terrible as or minimally better than what they had been twenty years ago. The shortage of trained medical staff, slow infrastructural improvements and difficult access to villages were formidable hurdles for the expansion of modern healthcare. This is in addition to the religious and cultural resistance of people to modern healthcare, which resulted from lack of awareness and misperceptions of new scientific advances. Even in this front 'the task fell on the shoulders of the recently school graduates who enthusiastically imparted medical knowledge to people'.⁹¹ Crucial, however, was the direction of centre- and urban-centred development plans, which generally lacked the will and initiatives for the peripheries and rural regions. This was partly, but significantly, compensated by a healthcare movement in Iran that promoted the idea and pushed for more reforms.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Indeed, the transformation of healthcare in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s originated from ‘a new and dynamic health movement’ which gained momentum in the early years of the second half of the century. The movement was characterised by an increasing number of individuals, who in the capacity of social activists contributed to the promotion of health awareness, and was embodied in public and private associations like Iranian Nurses Association (founded Khordad 1334/1955) and Persian journals such as *Health for All* and *Health Today*, published throughout the 1950s.⁹² This was extended to privately funded organisations to provide maternity care in rural areas.⁹³ The movement was inspired and supported by an active generation of individuals, representing a new literary and social movement, epitomised by poet Shohrab Sephehri or children’s book writer and illustrator Muhammad Zaman Zamani.⁹⁴ Usually overshadowed by elitist or political historiographies, this generation had its own history and continued to include many other literary figures, teachers and doctors, who, carrying a *revolutionary* zeal, were committed to social change to improve the life of Iranians.⁹⁵

Hospitals and medical services in Kurdistan

According to statistics published in March 1974, there were 9 hospitals, including one run by ‘foreign mission’, with 359 beds in the Kurdistan Province.⁹⁶ Along with most provinces orbiting the centre, there were no specialised hospitals or children hospitals.⁹⁷

⁹² Moarefi, "Behdāštbarā-Ye Hama".

⁹³ Mohammad Ali Faghih, "Behdārī," [maintaining health] in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV/1, 100-04, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/behdari>, accessed on 30 December 2012.

⁹⁴ Moarefi, "Behdāštbarā-Ye Hama".

⁹⁵ See Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: The New Press, 2007), Ch. 4. Devoid of any reference to Kurdish cultural modernity or the contributions of Kurdish literary individuals to the literary movement of the era, nevertheless Dabashi’s book provides valuable insight into the literary, intellectual and social movements of the era.

⁹⁶ Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 102-04.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Plan and Budget Organisation's 1974 *Statistical Yearbook* listed 66 unspecified clinics, 10 ambulances and 26 pharmacies for the province where around 100 children were claimed to have received support from the Pahlavi charity.⁹⁸ Mostly general practitioners and some general surgeons, the number of doctors did not reach one hundred. The considerable rise in the number of medical staff across Iran did not mean that they were distributed equally over provinces. The number of people employed in healthcare across Iran rose from 34,000 in 1966⁹⁹ to 79,710 in 1978.¹⁰⁰ As the next figure shows, healthcare in Iran at the end of the 1970s could not be compared with earlier decades. According to contemporaries, a gradual change in health conditions in the Kurdish region became more tangible since the early 1960s. By 1970 there were more medical centres in urban areas, immunisation had become available, and sanitation improved with the effect that cities began to acquire covered carriage systems for transporting sewage; there were more toilets, cleaner public baths and piped potable water. However, hygienisation depended on planned urbanisation, the availability of services such as electricity, roads and transportation. These elements improved slowly and remained vulnerable in the face of harsh climates. For example, in winter and spring roads were blocked or flooded, interrupting transportation and the supply of fuel.¹⁰¹ As more roads were built more villages benefited from piped potable water, fertilisation and exterminators for the application of chemicals to eliminate vermin and insects. This demonstrates how tightly the elements of modernisation were interrelated.

A new method pursued by the state as a principle of the White Revolution was the formation of the Health Corps. It consisted of young men and women, whose educational

⁹⁸ Ibid., 159.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹⁰⁰ Faghih, "Behdārī".

¹⁰¹ 'Azizpur, Interview; Amini, Interview.

level was high school diploma or above, and were trained for a few months before being dispatched to rural areas to work on rudimentary health and sanitation projects as part of their military service. There were also mobile units, including medical women, who supplied free contraceptives, an important medical development in rural areas since the end of the 1960s, and provided advice on menstruation and pregnancy.¹⁰² These units visited villages which had access to roads and transportation, but excluded a considerable number of inaccessible villages. Nevertheless, female nurses and teachers were crucial to the improvement of women's living conditions. In the 1970s the risk of miscarriage or death during childbirth was still high. By the middle of 1970s, the number of infectious diseases had decreased and immunisation had increased. However, this was primarily an urban phenomenon, leaving the rural areas and the majority of the population struggling with poor standards of hygiene and without healthcare.

Many reasons explained this gradual hygienisation and continuation of gruesome conditions in both Kurdish rural areas and poor city neighbourhoods. According to contemporary observers the state-led economic development was influenced by political considerations with the effect that, for example, the budgetary share of hygiene in comparison to the military was much lower. Although statistics refer to an institutional transformation of healthcare in Iran by the end of the 1970s, from a population of almost 30 million, the number of students attending medical schools (*daneshkade-ye Pezeshki*) across Iran was only 500-600 per year, indicating the low number of trained medical staff.¹⁰³ Moreover, the state concentrated on the centre and did not follow specific economic plans to boost peripheral regions' economic potential, as for example was the

¹⁰² 'Azizpur, Interview.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

case not only in Kurdistan or Baluchistan but also in Khuzistan despite its oil and gas mines. As another study on the subject argues,

Despite these advances, the development of health care in Iran was hampered by a lack of central planning and organization. Services provided by state and municipal organizations, on the one hand, and private groups, on the other, at times overlapped, causing wasteful duplication, while at the same time, because of maldistribution of services in terms of quantity and quality, segments of the population and some geographical areas could not be served properly.¹⁰⁴

There were also cultural barriers for the expansion of healthcare. Modern healthcare not only had to transform living conditions but also the perception of people who trusted conventional methods. Religious authorities like prominent *sheikhs* who had vested interest in maintaining conventional or religious methods continued to consolidate their authority on people's mind by ridiculing and demonising new scientific knowledge. The absence of a tenacious effort on behalf of the state, except for its military presence, to expand knowledge and services meant that religious authorities continued to keep their hold on the society, especially in rural communities. This uneven modernisation of healthcare in Iran is best seen in the horrific health conditions which were still common in most rural areas in the Kurdish region in the late 1970s. The revolutionary upheavals at the end of the decade exposed the quality of life in villages when contacts increased and more educated individuals, including doctors and nurses, visited the countryside. Their testimonies demonstrate how villages (many only ten to twenty kilometres away from cities) were still deprived of electricity or potable water, or people used the same

¹⁰⁴ Faghih, "Behdārī".

hot water pool for washing;¹⁰⁵ in other villages open sewers passed through houses and into the nearby river while, shockingly, people used the same river, that had absorbed sewage of upper villages on its way, for drinking and cooking.¹⁰⁶ The presence of this new revolutionary generation in the rural areas was an unprecedented event which exerted a profound impact on the social awareness of the people.

Utopias of social welfare

As was the case with the concepts of *behdasht* (health), hygienisation and healthcare institutions, 'social welfare' was a latecomer too, prioritised in Iran's Fourth Development Plan (1968-1973). Evaluating a request for social welfare expertise by Iran's Plan and Budget Organisation, the Middle East Department of Britain's Ministry of Overseas Development noted that this ambitious plan included 'social insurance, family and child welfare, Youth Development, Community Development, Industrial Welfare, Rehabilitation of handicapped groups, Research and Training'.¹⁰⁷ It was no secret that Iran was conspicuously devoid of expertise, trained personnel and relevant institutions and that this deficiency was in fact the reason behind the organisation's request made in 1969 for social welfare experts.¹⁰⁸ Although the request was initially regarded as both an indication of Iran's seriousness 'about its plans for the development of social welfare' and an opportunity to invest in 'a well-developed and progressive outfit', the final reply states that 'the Iran request in present circumstances is a dubious one and need not be followed up'.¹⁰⁹ The main reason for this was the Department's dissatisfaction with an old-fashioned, nineteenth-century perception of welfare as 'soup

¹⁰⁵ 'Azizpur, Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ 'Request for technical assistant, (MID 242/86/02), dated 10 July 1969, TNA, OD 34/272.

¹⁰⁸ 'Request for social welfare experts', (MID 242/86/02), dated 02 July 1969, TNA, OD 34/272.

¹⁰⁹ 'Request for social welfare experts', (MID 242/86/02), dated 08 July 1969 TNA, OD 34/272.

kitchen and crutches for cripples'.¹¹⁰ Therefore, as the ministry's representative in Iran, J. H. O'Regan, stated later, it was better to 'concentrate on those tasks which are either in our interests to pursue, or which are likely to make a reasonable impact on Iran's development (in the wider sense of the term) or both'.¹¹¹ Mrs Behaqi, who supervised the Organisation's social welfare plan, desperately searched for expertise to teach new modules related to social welfare in Tehran and Shiraz universities.¹¹² The Organisation found itself in such a desperate situation that it even welcomed experts with lower degrees to teach or work as development officers.¹¹³ Therefore, while the welfare system was at best unorganised and ineffective, both a faulty conception of welfare and desperate requests for experts revealed the grim state of 'welfare' in Iran in the end of the 1960s.

The principles of the White Revolution included social policies as well. In the end of 1975 policies regarding education in the form of free education, including free meals 'for the needy', 'from kindergarten through the eighth grade', and free secondary and university education in return for undertaking public services. In addition to the expansion of health centres and hospitals, the Lion and Sun Society (equivalent of the Red Cross) was assigned the task of providing healthcare to underprivileged while other state organisations affiliated with various ministries were supposed to cover people and regions not covered by the national health plan; more emphasis was put on medical units for the rural areas. However, as regards social welfare projects, dreadful social conditions continued. Social projects envisioned in the Fourth Plan became utopian projects which, with more promises made by the mid-1970s, continued to excite some economists who,

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ 'Request for social welfare experts', (MID 242/86/02), dated 20 June 1969, TNA, OD 34/272.

¹¹² 'Request for social welfare experts', (MID 242/86/02), dated 27 September 1968, TNA, OD 34/272.

¹¹³ 'Request for social welfare experts', (ES 332/213/03), dated 24 September 1968, TNA, OD 34/272.

based on Iran's unprecedented economic growth during the early 1970s, believed 'there were bright prospect for a resurgence of another Great Civilization'.¹¹⁴

During the 1970s the Kurdish rural region remained outside any social welfare. There are no reliable statistics on or any indication of the existence of any such projects by contemporaries. Simultaneously, the impoverishing impact of the unplanned urbanisation and population growth revealed the dearth of social services in the urban centres. For example, modernisation exposed on a wider scale those with physical or learning difficulties as well as those in need of mental healthcare. Social problems emerged in many forms and the state at best responded to only some aspects of them. For example, in some cities, city councils set up *parvareshgah* (Pe. Orphanage) to protect orphaned children who were born out of marriage or abandoned by the side of a road. They came to be called *parvareshgahi* (Pe. raised in an orphanage) and the law for the protection of infants without guardians allowed adoption of these children by Iranians.¹¹⁵ Being raised in such an institution had both cultural and social consequences. Children born outside marriage were perceived as *na-shar'i* (Ku. illegitimate) and were called *zoll* (Ku. bastard); *parvareshgahi* was a new category which connoted a lower social status of those either born outside marriage or not living in a family. Moreover, the number of centres for the protection of people affected by lethal or life-changing diseases such as tuberculosis or leprosy were very limited. Leprosy patients were completely unprotected in the Kurdish rural areas and isolated in the cities. Infectious diseases were still lethal

¹¹⁴ Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, ix. Otherwise a very informative source with valuable data on the economic performance of Iran, its optimistic and uncritical approach to economic or social policies of the state is accompanied by avoiding any discussion of social consequences of modernisation.

¹¹⁵ According to Yadola Biglari, a family judge, giving custody of a child to a person married to a citizen of a foreign country was not desirable; however, in one case he gave custody of a child to an Iranian man and his Swedish wife. See Biglari, Interview.

during the 1970s. For example, according to a medical college student, in the mid-1970s a high percentage of patients who admitted to his university hospital in Tehran died.¹¹⁶

In fact, the notion of ‘people in need’ was itself dubious, confirmed by the extension of the categorisation of people to those who looked or acted ‘differently’. Many city neighbourhoods were characterised by individuals, many of whom adults, who suffered from down syndrome or speaking disabilities but, instead of their needs being recognised, they faced continuous violence in the forms of derogatory names, insults, intimidation and staring. There were no institutions available to take such individuals under their protection. Moreover, physical disabilities determined social status of individuals identified as ‘*goj*’ (Ku. ‘deformed’), maintaining a feeling of shame in them, social isolation and deprivation. It goes without saying that individuals affected by such conditions were deprived of education, while in most cases they also had to work in unfavourable circumstances. Categorisation and the continuation of ingrained cultural attitudes, the lack of education, health and social services were not peculiar to Iranian societies. They were universal issues. However, a decade after the introduction of the relevant projects in the development plans such individuals continued to rely on family and relatives rather than state institutions, which were either absent or inadequate.

CONCLUSION

This chapter analyses the social consequences of land reform and modernisation which in the Kurdish region were followed by the migration of poor peasants to cities and by unbridled urbanisation. Insofar as the land reform is concerned, its uneven and inconsistent nature failed in ameliorating life in rural areas, still characterised by appalling

¹¹⁶ 'Azizpur, Interview.

conditions in the end of the 1970s. Moreover, although it dealt the landowner class a mighty blow, this class remained wealthy and powerful, and for this reason a form of authority (sometimes military power) was consistently needed to ensure its acquiescence. That is why once the central authority was weakened amid the popular revolution in 1978-9, in many regions the Kurdish *agha* class re-emerged to demand the restitution of their lost lands. However, both the regime of the Kurdish *agha* and tribalism were effectively weakened because of the *combined* effects of land reform and the socio-economic modernisation of Iran.

Modernisation intensified in the era of the White Revolution towards an increasing urban-market based economy with significant consequences for the existing class structure and for the social composition of society. The expansion of the modernising institutions and state administration created a new urban, educated class, which, alongside the bazaar, construction and land investors, formed different layers of a new Kurdish middle class. At the same time, the modern Kurdish working class began to form amid an intensified modernisation and affected by its consequences. The unpreparedness of the development plans to face the consequences of modernisation and the dearth of social services created impoverished city neighbourhoods which was made up of the lower strata of the village population. Moreover, the expansion of Kurdish cities and the search for income by the new free-moving labour class increased the number of the urban wage labourers, who simultaneously faced both educational and healthcare deprivation and were exposed to social categorisation.

The middle class was distinguished by higher income and employment in the public sector which bestowed on them a higher social status; they had more access to healthcare, new means of communication, i.e. radio and television, books and magazines

while their offspring could experience a relatively comfortable childhood. In short, these emerging classes were discernible by (1) level of income and (2) access to services, technologies and cultural capital. Moreover, in the making of a modern Kurdish working class the emergence of a new class of seasonal workers and family migration, which marked two significant consequences of land reform and modernisation, is significant. In all cases, individuals were exposed to exploitation in the absence of any labour laws, exacerbated by undesirable social and cultural environments; children and women were particularly vulnerable in this environment. Concurrently, village life remained devoid of social services still until the end of the 1970s, while the unequal expansion of modern education, *behdasht* and social services consolidated the existing gap between city and village.

Meanwhile, the intensification of modernisation led to more radical approaches in economic planning. Finding its rationale in an uneven economic development or existing regional gaps, the aborted Sixth Plan (1978-83), which ‘modelled after France’s *aménagement de territoire* [spatial planning]’, meant to achieve ‘closer national integration—geographic, socio-economic and cultural’; and ‘aimed at a *holistic* development of various regions and ultimately the entire *nation*’ [emphasis added].¹¹⁷ Moreover, economic development plans were affected by both political considerations and a nationalist vigour to ‘catch up with [Western] Europe’ economically as well as socially within 25 years, as the monarch claimed in 1975, lest the oil resources run out.¹¹⁸ This holistic approach was pursued not merely in economic spheres but also in socio-cultural realms. As noted above, based on a homogenised Persian culture, Iran’s modern education became increasingly an institution to foster a new, uncritical ‘Iranian’.

¹¹⁷ Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 260.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 259.

Finally, dictatorship alongside such methodological and ideological radicalisations widened the gap between the state and what is assumed to be Iran's *generations for change*. Excluding others and ignoring advice in the last two decades of his reign, the Shah eventually became the embodiment of the state, whereas, as the product of both modern education and the ideas of the time, the generations of social activists and intellectuals acquired an increased role in social change, determined to move towards a socio-culturally progressive and democratic modernity. Even before the Shah was proven to be 'not a man of crisis', as the American ambassador noted during the political upheavals of 1978-9,¹¹⁹ one is tempted to say that he had already failed these generations by his authoritative role in the mismanagement of the modernisation process, providing indirectly the 'objective conditions' for the intellectual ascendancy of an authenticity searching nativism instead.

¹¹⁹ William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran* (USA: W.W. Norton and Company, 1981), 57.

Chapter 5: The Political and Cultural Consequences of Modernisation

INTRODUCTION

The intensification of the dual process of socio-economic and political modernisation in the era of the White Revolution resulted in significant political and cultural changes which conditioned the Kurds' resistance against homogenisation and marked the origins of modern trends in Kurdish politics. In the new age of visual means of communication, the era also transformed the existing social conditions and relations of power which reshaped cultural encounters in the multi-cultural nation-state of Iran.

Politically, the dual process increased political centralisation and effectively obstructed political participation. The state was eventually mutated into an omnipotent and omnipresent force and prevented any form of dissent through a standing army and, in some cases, explicit militarisation. However, the state's politics of cultural exclusion and homogenisation reinforced *Kurdayeti* in many forms. Consequently, ideologically embedded in an Iranian and worldwide context, networks of political and social urban activists emerged, leading to the formation of the nuclei of modern Kurdish political parties. The state justified suppression by reinforcing the assumption that *armed* struggle was an intrinsic characteristic of Kurdish opposition, undermining the existing non-violent political, social, cultural, and literary movements. This said, the political history of the era is more complicated and is distinguished for the prevalence of non-violent forms of opposition and, interestingly, a critique of armed struggle, which new Iranian organisations such as Fedayyan and Mojahedeen perceived 'as both strategy and tactic'.¹

¹ Mas'ud Ahmadzadeh, *Mobareze Mosalahane: Ham Estrategy Va Ham Taktik* [Armed Struggle as both Strategy and Tactic] (1349 [1970]), Available at http://www.iran-archive.com/sites/default/files/sanad/cherikha_ta_1357-mobarezeh_masud.pdf, accessed 17/09/2017. For more on Fedayyan see Peyman Vahabzadeh, "A Generation Myth: Armed Struggle and the Creation of Social Epic in 1970s Iran," in H. E. Chehabi, et al. (eds), *Iran in the Middle East: Transnational Encounters and Social History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

Insofar as cultural consequences of modernisation are concerned, this chapter focuses on ‘Westernisation’ and the establishment of the cultural hegemony of Persian language and culture. This is for two reasons: first, these two aspects provide specific perspectives to deal with cultural modernisation in multicultural Iran. ‘Westernisation’ here refers to new cultural products and ways of life originating from Western Europe and the United States which either were embraced or elicited resistance. Secondly, an analysis of these two aspects theoretically enables us to identify other mechanisms of cultural encounters in a historically multicultural entity. In contrast to the mechanisms of cultural encounters in a colonial context, this includes the centralisation of power and the cultural hegemony of the ‘superior’ culture. Of course, the postcolonial era witnessed the reproduction of the coloniser’s cultural superiority over the natives and the spread of economic corporations, which compensated for the coloniser’s physical absence or military and political rule. However, the distinctive elements of foreign/native always remained. In the case of the *modern* encounter of Persian and Kurdish cultures, the scale and the meaning of this distinction were different from a colonial encounter, which was deeply rooted in race and conquest. Within a multicultural nation-state, modern cultural encounters began to take place between cultures with intimate relations with each other, resulting in the hegemony of one over others. This is explained by analysing the process in which Persian cultural hegemony, defined and (re)introduced as *Iranian*, was realised and ensured its superiority over others in modern Iran. Moreover, in this process the new audio and visual means of communication were as essential as modern education. Also for this reason, the era of the White Revolution is distinguished, to borrow from John Thompson, for the *mediasation* of culture, that is, ‘the rapid proliferation of institutions of mass communication and the growth of networks of transmission through which commodified symbolic forms were made available to an ever-expanding domain of

recipients'.² Therefore, as regards the cultural transformation of Iran, it is precisely for achieving Persian cultural hegemony that the era of the White Revolution sets itself apart from the preceding eras.

MODERNISATION AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN KURDISTAN

The modernisation of Iran continued to transform the political structure of Kurdistan. By the second half of the century, tribal local powers, mainly under duress, had submitted to the authority of the state. By the early 1970s nobody could cast doubt on the existence of an omnipotent state, recognised by its military prowess and intelligence agencies and characterised by an expanding bureaucratic administration. However, since the experience of Mahabad the oppressive machinery of the state had remained on standby for quelling any possible re-emergence of Kurdish opposition, which nevertheless re-emerged, were quelled, and against all odds rose again to challenge political power. On the other hand, political centralisation effectively undermined political participation with the effect that the electoral process for the parliament became meaningless while the parliament itself became all but a rubber stamp. Therefore, these circumstances, affected by modern education, resulted in new networks of Kurdish political activists and, subsequently, the formation of the nuclei of modern Kurdish political parties. Iran continued to constitute the framework for political activism, while the organisational structure was not limited to the Kurdish region and ideological bearings reflected wider regional and international contexts. This situation was a direct result of the socio-economic and political modernisation of Iran. Indeed, when new Kurdish political parties emerged amid the 1979 Revolution, it was no coincidence that their political programmes were explicitly articulated in the framework of modern Iran. To elaborate these claims, the following two sections present an overview of the political situation since the fall of

² Thompson, *Ideology*, 11.

the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad until the end of the 1970s. This arbitrary periodisation is based on moments when changes are visible regarding the formation and political orientations of Kurdish opposition.

1946-1968: the formative years of the Kurdish modern opposition

This period begins with the suppression of the Kurdish Republic and ends with the quelling of what is known in Kurdish collective memory as *the rebellion of 1968-9*. In the post-Republic era, the political structure of Kurdistan continued to be shaped by political considerations of the state because of the threat of Kurdish opposition. Political suppression and incarceration of activists persisted, but, despite this, clandestine political activities also continued. Although the idea of armed struggle, with its universal appeal in the context of the concurrent Kurdish movement in Iraq, was going to become attractive, Kurdish political activism was recognised by clandestine, political and other non-violent methods, devoid of any specific plan for armed struggle. Even in the 1960s, when because of changing circumstances a group of activists based in Iraqi Kurdistan carried arms to protect themselves against capture and detention, the main concern remained the reorganisation of non-violent forms of dissent inside Iran. Nevertheless, 1968 and 1969 are significant years in Kurdish collective memory in Iran. During these years Kurdish opposition met the aggressive reaction of SAVAK (Sazman-e Amniyat Va Etelaat-e Keshvar), Iran's fearsome intelligence service, and the Iranian army. This culminated in a dangerous situation in 1968 when the army succeeded in quelling an important section of the opposition which moved as armed groups mainly in the northern part of the Kurdish region and made contact with the population and their sympathisers. As a result, the myth of *shorreshi 46-47* (Ku. The rebellion of 1968-69) was born.

Political activities in this period had their origins in the quasi-autonomous situation of the early 1940s which culminated in the Republic. Converged effectively in the following decades, political activities concentrated in the northern areas of the

Kurdish region, whereas political and cultural activism in the southern parts, which remained under the state control during these years, continued to be reshaped as socio-economic and political modernisations of Iran persisted. Dispersion and prolonged incarcerations followed the demise of the Republic, symbolised by forced exile and Ghani Bilouriyan's and Aziz Yousefi's prison years.³ However, the remnants of *Kumita-i Lawan-i Dimokrat* or the Republic's Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's (DPIK) Youth Organisation matured to form the backbone of a new reinvigorated group, reinforced later by many others in the 1950s and 1960s, including university students. In these years, DPIK owed its nominal existence to a few individuals and was mostly regarded as a regional branch of the Tudeh (masses) Party of Iran until after the 1953 coup against Muhammad Musaddeq. Although for many DPIK members the Tudeh Party maintained its ideological and organisational significance, the expansion from the early 1960s to the 1970s was concurrent with DPIK's growing organisational independence and the demise of the influence of the Tudeh Party.⁴

The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the waves of arrests in Iranian Kurdistan in 1959 and 1963, which forced many to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan, were two important developments in the revival of Kurdish opposition.⁵ According to prominent members of DPIK, in 1959 500 activists were either arrested or fled to Iraqi Kurdistan; this was repeated in 1963.⁶ According to Sa'id Kawa Kwestani, who became a central figure in the reorganisation of the party in the early 1960s, the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 reinvigorated Kurdish dissent after it had experienced serious setbacks during the 1953 coup which was followed by the quelling of the peasant uprising in Iranian Kurdistan.⁷ However, this revival led to new

³ Cf. Hazhar, *Cheshti Mijawir*.

⁴ Cf. Karim Hesami, *Khaterate Karim Hesami* [Karim Hesami's Memoirs] (Sweden: Arzan, 2011), 102-31.

⁵ Muhammad Khezri, *Laparayek La Tekoshan W Julanaway Salakani 42-47 Hezbi Dimokrati Kurdistan* [A Page from the Struggle and Movement of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (1963-68)] (Sweden: n.p., 2003), 13.

⁶ Ibid., 13 and 26.

⁷ Sa'id Kawa Kwestani, *Awerrek La Basarhati Khom* [Looking Back on My Life] (1996), Available at <http://said.kurdland.com> in PDF format, Accessed on 23 May 2018, 54-55.

waves of arrests and imprisonments as a result of which a considerable number of political activists escaped to Iraqi Kurdistan.⁸

The Iraqi Revolution had strengthened the Kurdish movement in Iraq under Mustafa Barzani, subsequently creating a space for a group of Kurdish-Iranian activists, among them Ahmad Eshaqi (known as Ahmad Tawfiq), to try to rebuild DPIK in the early 1960s.⁹ Attached closely to Barzani, the arbitrary measures of Tawfiq shrank the size of this group in Iraqi Kurdistan and disillusioned others. Finally, in the aftermath of the party's rather impromptu Second Congress in 1963, Tawfiq became increasingly isolated and then disappeared 'mysteriously' in the areas under the Barzani's control—he had allegedly met Iraqi officials secretly in Baghdad and this 'betrayal' apparently sealed his unfortunate fate. Simultaneously, there were other members who followed a different, more democratic path in a new international context. One member later described his colleagues' ideological and political outlooks:

These individuals were left-wing *runak-biran* [Ku. enlightened; roshan-fekran in Persian]. In those days [the 1960s] it was the left-wing forces which led and pioneered anti-imperialist and emancipatory movements in East Asia, Africa and Latin America. We might not have equaled such groups in theoretical capacity, but we passionately felt attached to the path [they followed].¹⁰

Attempts to rebuild the party and expand political activities continued in trying circumstances but with determination. Distancing themselves gradually from Tawfiq, the majority of this group, reinforced by a new wave of sympathisers, who had fled the political suppression of 1963, organised in the form of small, armed groups which led excursions to the Kurdish region in Iran in order to reorganise cells and inspire political

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Khezri, *Laparayek*, 13.

¹⁰ Ibid., 129.

actions. This continued until 1968 and led to military clashes with the gendarmerie on many occasions. In a delicate situation, the Shah's dictatorship installed brutal political repression in the aftermath of the political instability of the early 1960s as a response to the Kurdish movement in Iraq, which had given Kurdish activists in Iran motivation to expand their activities. Inevitably, the political activities of this group based in Iraqi Kurdistan and their attempts to maintain the organisational structure of the party in Iranian Kurdistan involved armed excursions. However, they lacked any plan for pursuing a guerrilla war. Instead, they argued that they had to be armed to protect themselves and avoid capture. In contrast to the prevalent popular and academic assumptions that this group's *primary* objective was to organise armed struggle,¹¹ oral accounts and published memoirs present a more complex picture. It is true that the concept of 'armed struggle' constituted this generation's ideological bearings and this is vividly reflected in Esmail Sharifzadeh's letter to Karim Hesami, written towards the end of the 1960s, in which he points out that 'today a revolutionary storm has engulfed the country [Iran] and people have come to the conclusion that the only way to freedom is to take up arms'.¹² However, this statement refers more to a new opportunity to expand and continue the struggle rather than a collective and planned action in that direction. Moreover, the letter did not necessarily represent the group, the main aim of which was to reorganise the party cells and maintain political opposition. As Muhammad Khezri recalls, when

Suleiman Mu'eini and other members undertook an excursion [inside Iranian Kurdistan] [...] the purpose of their trip was not to instigate an [armed] rebellion [...] because they had a good understanding of the situation which was unfavourable.

¹¹ Cf. Farideh Koohi-Kamali, *The Political Development of Kurds in Iran* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 168-71. Otherwise a valuable book, this book remains uninformed in this respect despite the availability of many contemporary accounts written by such activists.

¹² Hesami, *Khaterat*, 121.

They had to move back to Iran to avoid detention and extradition to Iran [by the Barzanis]’.¹³

The absence of both a collective plan and intention to embark on armed struggle is confirmed by Sa’id Kawa Kwestani who was a central figure in the Committee for the Reorganisation of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan in the early 1960s. Based on Kwestani’s autobiography, one can infer that for many years the main aims of their group were to reorganise the party and its cells in Iranian Kurdistan and resume political activities. Therefore, armed struggle never appears to gain any pivotal role in the group’s activism or political programme; firearms were carried merely for protection and used in self-defence.¹⁴

Furthermore, unlike Fedayyan, who, believing that the small engine of the revolutionaries could stimulate the big engine of the working class or the general public, and attacked a gendarmerie in Siyahkal in northern Iran in February 1971, this Kurdish group never intended to carry out any *planned* armed activity. Indeed, except for eulogising the clashes, Kurdish texts never refer to any premeditated actions. Of course, dictatorship and the militarisation of Kurdistan, in addition to the existence of other Kurdish movements in the neighbouring countries, strengthened inclination towards armed struggle as a form of resistance, as there has always been a correlation between militarisation and armed struggle in modern Kurdish histories. Therefore, ‘armed struggle’ as an idea existed but its practice was stipulated by circumstances; it was never planned as ‘strategy or tactic’. As another illustration of this, when armed groups appeared more frequently in Iranian Kurdistan, Esmail Sharifzada appealed in another letter to Kurdish activists studying in universities across Tehran to join them;¹⁵ they

¹³ Khezri, *Laparayek*, 155.

¹⁴ See Kwestani, *Awerrek*, 72-115.

¹⁵ Biglari, Interview.

rejected the appeal. The group and their associates inside Iran were aware of the obstacles to expanding their overt political activities or transforming it into an organised armed struggle. For example, the population remained merely sympathetic because the fear of arrest, torture and execution was widespread. Jeldiyan detention centre, or the 'slaughter house of Jeldiyan' as it was known in those years, became notorious for its brutal treatment of detained Kurdish political activists.¹⁶ Therefore, we can conclude that, on the one hand, rather than eluding to a plan, the evidence refers to the popularity of armed struggle especially in a new worldwide context, for example, in the wake of the Cuban Revolution and because of the Vietnam War. On the other hand, based on oral history, the complexity of this issue simultaneously defies the notion of Kurdish opposition's intrinsic proclivity to guerrilla warfare and undermines the state's pretext of armed rebellion to suppress Kurdish political and cultural resistance in any forms. The state was especially sensitive to this situation, as it had experienced a formidable Kurdish peasant uprising in 1952-3 and had to intervene on behalf of the threatened Kurdish *agha* class; as comrades in arms they brutally suppressed the uprising.¹⁷

Moreover, the political situation of the end of the 1960s increased pressure on the Kurdish activists who were based in free zones under Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan. The amiable relationship between the Kurdish movement in Iraq and the Iranian government, which was engaged in hostility with part of the Arab world, exacerbated the situation, effectively restraining the group's activity with the effect that the Barzani movement detained and extradited some members of the group to SAVAK. Suleiman Mu'eini came to symbolise the Barzani movement's acts of detention and extradition. He was allegedly assassinated by those associated with the movement in May 1968 and his body was surrendered to Iranian authorities and publicly displayed in cities of Piranshar and

¹⁶ Khezri, *Laparayek*, 83.

¹⁷ On the uprising see Hassanpour, "The Peasant Uprising".

Mahabad.¹⁸ The expansion of this group and its political activities forced the Iranian government to militarise especially the northern areas of the Kurdish region and deploy more troops to guard the border with Iraqi Kurdistan. Astonishingly, this was followed by the Iranian army's encroachment onto Iraqi Kurdistan to arrest the activists.¹⁹ The 'Rebellion of 1968-9' took form in such circumstances rather spontaneously.²⁰

At the same time, the Union of Kurdish Students in Tehran crystallised the characteristics of the Kurdish political movement of the 1960s. In fact, it was both the other pole of the group described above and a centre for Kurdish opposition. The Union was historically significant for two reasons: first, it reflected the reorganisation of Kurdish political activities around an urbanised, educated generation; second, it embodied an intellectual transformation in a broader context of the popularity of anti-imperialist, left-wing and revolutionary ideas, leading to an explicit critique of armed struggle in favour of social revolution in the 1970s. However, the members of the Union faced political repression amid political instability in June 1963 with the effect that many of its members were detained when security forces raided Tehran University in Amirabad, while some others fled to join the group already in Iraqi Kurdistan.²¹ This marked practically the end of the Union.²² However, upon their release from prison a year or so later, many of the members resumed their political activities. According to a contemporary observer, 'this was the time when in the middle of the 1960s left-wing and socialist ideas attracted more students in Tehran and Tabriz universities' as new centres of intellectual activities.²³ For example, students' social perception was effectively shaped by Dr Amirhosain

¹⁸ See Khezri, *Laparayek*, 186-7. According to contemporary and eye witness accounts, in another incident in Iraqi Kurdistan in spring 1968, five members were arrested in a house in Alane village in a common operation by forces of the Barzani movement and the Iranian gendarmerie. Four were taken to Jeldiyan military base where they were tortured and then executed there or in the Kurdish city of Piranshar's military base; the body of the fifth person called Ebrahim Dalawaiy (sur), who had been wounded in this raid and died later, was displayed in public in Piranshar. For this see *ibid.*, 164-5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 162-66.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

²¹ Biglari, Interview.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

Aryanpur's sociology class in Tehran University.²⁴ Furthermore, the political developments, e.g. the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, shaped political outlooks. By then, Marxist and socialist ideas alongside *Kurdayeti* became guiding principles for a growing population of Kurdish university students, inspiring the remnants of the Union to contemplate organisational and political actions.²⁵ This was especially the case in the wake of the quelling of the group, although, for example, Kurdish activists from Tehran had pondered to join them when DPIK members had begun to appear more frequently in northern regions of Iranian Kurdistan between 1968 and 1969. However, they were discouraged by internal disagreements and ultimately by the news of the rebels' capture or death.²⁶

The deaths of Esmail Sharifzada, Mala Awara, Mina Sham and Mu'eini brothers, Suleiman and Abdulla, terminated what came to be known as *shorresh-i sallakan-i 46-47* [the rebellion of the years 1968-69]. However, for the Kurds they became legends, connected past and present, and inspired future generations. The termination of the rebellion was meant to be the start of a new era for the Kurdish political activism in Iran.

1968-1979: the expansion of the urban, educated generation and intellectual transformations

The legacy of the political activism of the 1960s, symbolised by the rebellion, lived on but a new era had begun around a critique of armed struggle too. Political activism of the post-1968 era is distinguished by two groups of political activists. The first group, which was still influenced by left-wing ideas, included those who were committed to rebuilding and re-organising DPIK, and its prominent members lived in exile.²⁷ Inspired by the movement and with their main bases in universities, the second group committed

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The Third Party Conference of DPIK in June 1971 ratified the party's programme. For this see Hesami, *Khaterat*, 129.

themselves to Marxism and social revolution. In fact, with more ideological and cultural connections with the outside world, the modernisation of Iran had created new possibilities for political action, this time around quite different organisational and political ideas: Marxism and the need for a communist party to prepare subjective conditions for the overthrow of capitalism and building of socialism by a (social) revolution, objective conditions of which, they believed, had become ripe.²⁸ Revolutions, anti-colonial struggles and progressive movements around the world enhanced the credibility of such ideas, whereas the structural transformation of Kurdish society from a landowner-peasant economy or 'feudalism' into a capitalist-worker economic system 'necessitated' new theoretical and practical approaches. While the second group of activists shared Marxist and socialist ideas with other left-wing forces such as Fedayyan, they differed from them by their explicit refutation of Fedayyans' *mash-e cheriki* or armed struggle. Lastly, although unlike the rest of Iran the growing modern Kurdish opposition was mainly dominated by leftist and secular ideas, Westernisation of Iran also had its political implications for religion in the Sunni dominated Kurdish region. This came to be embodied in the political life of Ahmad Muftizada (see below).

With regard to political participation, as modernisation and urbanisation accelerated, giving form to new political and cultural desires, no means of political participation in Kurdistan was promoted. In contrast, during the 1970s, the state became increasingly personified in the Shah who stopped listening to critiques or proposals while more capable individuals were sidelined in favour of uncritical acolytes, thus undermining collective efforts to modernise Iran in a more democratic way. For example, uncritical Amir Abbas Hovaida replaced Mansour, assassinated in 1965, as Prime

²⁸ Biglari, Interview; Bahman Sa'idi, *Penj Sal Lagal Abdulla Muhtadi* [Five Years with Abdulla Mohtadi] (Sulaymaniya: n.p., 2010); Bahman Sa'idi, *Khabat Baraw Sarkawtin: Didarek Lagal Ebrahim 'Alizada* [Struggle Towards Victory: A Meeting with Ebrahim Alizadeh] (Kurdistan: Komala Central Committee Publication, 2012); Sho'eib Zakaryayi, *Tharikhe Bazandeh: Naqdi Bar Husein Moradbegi's Tarikhe Bazandeh* [The Lost History: A Critical Review of Hossain Moradbegi's 'Living History'] (Sulaymaniya: Rawand, 2010).

Minister, while Abdulla Entezam, the chairman of National Iranian Oil Company, ‘who appreciated different opinions [and] a wise administrator [...] of which there were too few in Iran’, was dismissed in the aftermath of June 1963 religious uprising²⁹—he had advised in the presence of the Shah that ‘the will of people ought to be respected’.³⁰ Ideologically, based on historical myths an exclusively radicalised national perception of ‘Iran’ was being promoted by grand gestures such as the outrageously expensive 2,500 Celebration of Iranian monarchy in 1971. This, in turn, encouraged further linguistic purification in favour of Persian, leading to the sudden change of calendar in the mid-1970s to reflect a historical monarchy. Thus, the cult of personality was complete, and the Shah had become *saye-ye Khoda* or God’s shadow on earth.³¹

As a result, nascent political participation of the Constitutional years, noted in Chapter 2, continued to regress, shaping the Kurdish society of the 1970s in which people were, to benefit from Henry Tudor’s insight on another topic, ‘either excluded from politics altogether or who [found] their participation so regulated as to be ineffective’.³² The election of ineffective Kurdish members of *Majlis* (Iran’s Parliament) exemplified precisely such a situation. This was accompanied by means of coercion via both constant surveillance and detentions by SAVAK and the presence of the army and gendarmerie bases in cities and the countryside, respectively.

In brief, the Kurdish opposition until 1979 included various groups whose political orientations were influenced by past events and current social changes with intellectual implications. Parallel with attempts to reorganise DPIK, a new group, the core of which came from Tehran and Tabriz universities, formed a new circle in 1968-9 which became the nucleus of the later influential Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Iranian Kurdistan, popularly known as Komala (Ku. organisation). This was followed

²⁹ See Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil*, 382 and p. 54.

³⁰ Ibid., 370.

³¹ Ibid., 395-401.

³² Henry Tudor, *Political Myth* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1972), 138.

throughout the 1970s by new networks of political and social activists who were influenced by past events and ongoing ideological transformations. Such networks were significant both politically and historically because, in the aftermath of the 1979 February uprising, both the new DPIK and Komala emerged as the most influential *modern* political parties in Iranian Kurdistan; structurally, they were the amalgamation of such networks. For this reason, they became rapidly popular within a short time span. This was especially the case with the latter.

23. The Iranian army displays Sulaiman Mu'eini's body, 1968.



The text reads: 'Sulaiman Mu'eini this is the outcome of treason'.

Source: Ruwange Website, at http://ruwange.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/blog-post_22.html, accessed 10 May 2018.



Esmail Sharifzada (1942-1968)



A well-known figure in Mahabad, Sulaiman Mu'eini (1933-1968) studied in Mahabad, Tehran and Tabriz.

24. Kurdish university students in the 1960s.



By the 1960s, the intellectual centre of modern Kurdish opposition moved to new Iranian universities. Kurdish university students in the University of Tehran, March 1964. Esmail Sharifzada (back row, right); the poet Swara Ilkhanizada (forth from right); and (second from right), Amir Hassanpour (1943-2017), who became a renowned professor of Kurdish studies.

Source: Kurdipedia, at <http://www.kurdipedia.org/?q=2010110717142710600&lng=8>, access 10 May 2018.

CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF MODERNISATION

In addition to the enrichment of cultural resources, the dual process strengthened difference in favour of a homogenising Persian culture and language. The proliferation of the new audio-visual means of communication in the era of the White Revolution added a new dimension to cultural encounters in Iran. This is analysed in the next section, followed by other sections which discuss ‘modernisation and secularisation’, intellectual transformations and the forms of cultural resistance.

The mediasation of culture and the theory of cultural encounters in a multicultural nation-state

As Pierre Bourdieu argues, culture as a symbolic system or structure, i.e. instruments of knowledge and communication [which] can exercise a structuring or symbolic power needed to construct reality,³³ relies on corresponding social conditions and relations of power to produce and perpetuate meanings which serve indirectly or directly the interest of the dominant groups or classes.³⁴ From this perspective, the era of the White Revolution profoundly impacted the existing social conditions and relations of power, the result of which was, in Gramscian sense, the cultural hegemony of Persian language and culture over non-Persian speaking peoples in Iran. As such, to borrow from Bourdieu, the dominant culture contributed to

the legitimization of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions. The dominant culture produces this ideological effect by concealing the function of division beneath the function of communication: the culture which unifies (the medium of communication) is also the culture which separates (the instrument of distinction) and which legitimates distinctions by forcing all other cultures (designated as sub-cultures) to define themselves by their distance from the dominant culture.³⁵

³³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 166; see also David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997), Ch. 1.

³⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Ch. 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

At the same time, as the symbolic system presents itself as a classification system which generates meaning through binary oppositions,³⁶ the enduring bipolarity of Persian as *mainstream* or *official* and other cultures within Iran as *local* distinguishes the era in question. However, culture as a source of domination also shapes cultural resistance of the unprivileged, as in our case wherein the Kurds sought to improve their position.

The intensification of modernisation in this era marked new ways of cultural encounters for which the proliferation of new means of mass communication, especially television and cinema, was pivotal. In this respect John Thompson's analysis of this communicative phenomenon, which characterises modern culture, provides great methodological insights. New means of communication serve to 'reorganise and reconstitute social interaction' and for Thompson this is precisely the significance of the deployment of technical media.³⁷ Thompson explains mass communication as a site for the operation of ideology in modern societies and defines 'ideological phenomena as meaningful symbolic forms in so far as they serve [...] to establish and sustain relations of domination'.³⁸ However, while this approach rightly invites extensive studies on the relation between ideology and mass communication in Kurdish-Iranian society, I focus on the way the framework for social interaction was transformed, for example, when radio and then especially television and cinema were institutionalised and spread in Iran in the second half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, Thompson formulates his thesis of 'the mediasation of culture' in contrast to the theses of secularisation and rationalisation of social life because, according to him, it is the mediasation of culture 'which provides the principal frame of reference' to analyse ideology in modern societies.³⁹ The proliferation of new means of communication involves the transformation of individuals' social

³⁶ Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, 84.

³⁷ Thompson, *Ideology*, 225.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

interaction, their perceptions of the world as well as the reorganisation of the relationship between the state and society. Benefiting from new means of communication, the era of the White Revolution transformed cultural encounters of Iranians with the outside world but just as crucially it transformed cultural encounters between various culturally distinct communities within Iran, resulting in the establishment of Persian cultural hegemony. The theory which is developed here considers the establishment of cultural hegemony of one community over many other communities that shared historical interactions and geographical proximity. For this peculiar situation, any cultural analysis methodology needs to take into account cultural encounters which are not colonial or imperial. Cultural critics of colonialism or Westernisation of culture, e.g. in Iran during the White Revolution, shed light on cultural encounters in direct or indirect colonial contexts where ‘cultural/historical/racial difference’ is fixed by the discourse of colonialism,⁴⁰ or where ‘nativism’ is revoked in the wake of cultural onslaught of the alien.⁴¹ Simultaneously, cultural critics have been concerned with the role of culture in the formation of modern nation.⁴² This said, the question of cultural encounters in the Middle East between *related* cultures has been largely overlooked by cultural and postcolonial studies which nevertheless provide a repository for a variety of critical practices which are methodologically significant for a study of cultural encounters in the nation-state of Iran. Studies on themes such as representation, power and knowledge, cultural production, resistance and diaspora provide theoretical foundations for cultural studies in Iran because there are similarities between colonial and non-colonial contexts, for example, in forms of control, legitimising ideologies or forms of resistance (see Figure 26).⁴³

⁴⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 66.

⁴¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), 276.

⁴² Cf. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*.

⁴³ For more on these themes see Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (New York: Routledge, 2001); and on post-colonial studies see Bill Ashcroft et al. (eds), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

However, such a study requires to go beyond, for example, post-colonial studies and focus on a multi-cultural, non-colonial context in order to present more productive analyses of cultural encounters of interrelated cultures in the age of visual media and avoid clichés. A close analogy to Kurdish and Persian cultural encounter is perhaps that between Ireland and the British Empire. However, an assessment of this example highlights more differences than similarities with the nature of cultural encounters within Iran. Finally, in what follows, the argument regarding Persian and Kurdish cultural encounters in a non-colonial context is pursued alongside a brief account of the emergence of the new means of communication and their impacts on cultural interaction in Iran.

Both in perception and in cultural and economic practices, the state's nationalism throughout the era of the White Revolution radicalised towards creating its perceived monolithic Iranian civilisation. Technical modernisation exposed Iranians to a westernised way of life and worldview, which enjoyed a worldwide cultural superiority. However, while within Persian culture the state's westernising modernisation evoked ideological reactions from an increasingly politicised Islam, which claimed to defend religion and cultural purity, and from socialist ideology, which criticised social inequality, electronic media simultaneously served to establish the hegemony of Persian culture in relation to other non-Persian communities; this is the flipside of cultural modernisation in those decades. Contemporary nativist and socialist critics were not concerned with cultural homogenisation even when their critiques of modernisation and capitalism expanded to include other ethnic communities. There are exceptions, but they are limited in scope. For example, in his *Tarikh-e Mozakkar* [Pe. Masculine History], written towards the end of the 1960s, the renowned cultural critic Reza Barahani drew attention to 'the relationship between the Persian language and local languages' because the latter,

according to him, also formed part of Iranian identity.⁴⁴ Barahani claimed that ‘the official language of Iran is Persian, which is right and justified. If someone denies this, you can have him hanged. But you cannot deny the local languages of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Gilan and Mazandaran’.⁴⁵ Barahani was mainly concerned with a relentless Westernisation of culture in general, which also tended to harm local music and languages. He made a mockery of the education system by saying that ‘from the very first moment the pupil wants to become an American’.⁴⁶ Discussing non-Persian speaking students, he then reminds his readers that ‘this [Persian] language is not the pupil’s mother tongue language the learning of which compulsory, but an additional language, an official and state language, which must be learnt by the pupil’.⁴⁷ Criticism of the inferior position of ‘local’ languages, i.e. mother tongues, surfaced in the works of other intellectuals and writers. For example, Jalal Ale Ahmad, a renowned Iranian writer who popularised the concept of ‘Westoxication’, was also concerned with the state’s homogenising language policies which, according to him, had no regard for local languages.⁴⁸

Regarding socialist literature, the output of Samad Behrangi (1939-1967), famous for his children’s literature, did not surpass the duality of official and local, and instead remained confined to the boundaries of class and class disparity.⁴⁹ Language was not discussed in relation to the cultural transformation Iran was experiencing at the time; for Behrangi language only reflected reality: ‘language is connected to reality (*Nezam-e hastiy* [Pe. the order of existence]) through ideas’.⁵⁰ Therefore, in the age of grand narratives, including the socialist outlook with the singularity of ‘class’ as the primary conceptual and organisational category, Behrangi was not attracted to nativism or the

⁴⁴ Barahani, *Tarikhe Mozakkar*, 105-06.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁹ Cf. Asad Behrangi (ed.), *Namehaye Samad Behrangi* [Samad Behrangi's Letters] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1357 [1979]); Samad Behrangi, *Qessehaye Behrang* [Behrang's Stories] (Tehran: Donya, 1359 [1980]).

⁵⁰ Asad Behrangi (ed.), *Majmu'e Assare Samad Behrangi* [Samad Behrangi's Collected Works] (Tabriz: Behrangi, 1382 [2005]), 67.

issue of cultural purity but was concerned with social injustice, which he criticised through his pedagogical literature. Furthermore, while, unlike the above-mentioned cultural critics, Behrangi was not concerned with cultural encounters or ‘Westernisation’, he nevertheless shared their avoidance of studies of the transformation of cultural relations between Iranian societies.

These examples, therefore, crucially demonstrate how difference is differently institutionalised in colonial and multicultural, non-colonial nation-state contexts. In the former, difference tends to be based on racial ideologies, whereas in the latter and in an Iranian context, difference is developed based on the dichotomy of ‘mainstream’ and ‘local’, which is then shaped and maintained mainly by various ideas of cultural superiority and inferiority rather than racial difference. The hegemonic quality that needs to be noted here is that the idea of ‘Persian as an official and state language’ had become common sense. In contrast to the earlier eras when Persian was praised and learned by, for example, Kurdish literates for its literary qualities, it had now acquired an official and state status, demonstrating a decisive cultural break with the past.

The conspicuous absence of studies on cultural encounters *within* Iran was another aspect of the contemporary literary journals such as those published by various universities’ faculties of literature between 1960 and 1979. For example, a glance at the journal of Tehran’s Faculty of Literature, *Nashriye-ye Daneshkade-ye Adabiyat-e Tehran*, and those of Tabriz and Mashhad, reveals two prevalent trends of the time. First, Iranian (culture and language) and Persian are used interchangeably with the effect that the latter is consistently confirmed as Iran’s core linguistic and cultural element around which other Iranian cultures orbit. In a speech on the preservation of the Persian language in the summer of 1959, Sa‘id Nafisi (1905-1966), an internationally renowned literary figure for his immense contribution to Persian literature and a prolific writer, stressed how language [in this case Persian] was the most important tool for any modern nation,

urging everyone to regard its 'preservation and expansion as their most important national duty'.⁵¹ The second trend bears on the absence of 'Kurdish literature' (and other non-Persian literatures) as a field of study or as a literary subject, a trend vividly represented by contemporary literary journals. For instance, throughout the 1960s and 1970s Tehran University's journal discussed the Kurdish language to a very limited extent, mostly in conjunction with '*gouyesh-haye Irani*' (Pe. Iranian dialects).⁵² While researchers were willing to warn against the threat of the extinction of the dialects, they did not forget to emphasise, for example, that 'among Iranian languages, the Persian language has a sublime status (*maqam-e arjomand*). This great language represents a brilliant civilisation and in its own right is unique in the world'.⁵³

However, culture as a source of domination also shapes the cultural resistance of the unprivileged, as in the current case wherein the Kurds sought to improve their position. The systematic promotion of Persian's cultural supremacy was paralleled by the promotion of Kurdish literature by the notable contribution of several Kurdish students or scholars of Kurdish literature, for example, Qadir Fattahi Qazi, 'Ubaidulla Ayyubian and 'Abdulhamid Huseini. This group admirably continued to write interesting articles on Kurdish folklore, epics, poetry and culture for Tabriz University's Faculty of Literature during the period. Ayyubian provided across many issues of the journal a translated version of Ahmad Khani's *Mam u Zin* [Mam and Zin], classifying it as *chiryka* or, according to him, an epic story.⁵⁴ This remained, however, an example of residual, tolerated culture, and not emergent culture, because the *Mam u Zin* of the mid-seventeenth century is written in Kurdish, and distinguishes the Kurds as a people with a distinct

⁵¹ Ziyaedin Sajjadi, "Sa'id Nafisi and Shenasantane Farhange Iran," [Sa'id Nafisi and Introducing the Culture of Iran], *Nashriyeye Adabiyat wa Olume Ensanie Daneshkadeye Tehran* 14, No. 3 (1967), 363.

⁵² Cf. Dr Bahram Frewshi, "Zabanhaye Irani Dar Kharej Az Iran," [Iranian Languages Outside of Iran], *Nashriye Adabiyate Daneshkade Tehran* 12, No. 3-4 (1344 [1965]); Dr Mansur Ekhtiyar, "Shiweye Barresiye Guyeshha," [The way to Analyse Dielects], *Nashriyeye Adabiyate Daneshkadeye Tehran* 12, No. 2 (1343 [1964]).

⁵³ Frewshi, "Zabanhaye Irani Dar Kharej Az Iran", 326.

⁵⁴ Cf. 'Ubaidulla Ayyubian, "Barresiye Tahqiqie Chiryka Mam U Zin," [An Analysis of Mam and Zin Epic Story], *Nashriyeye Adabiyate Daneshkadeye Tabriz* 13, No. 2 (1340 [1961]).

history and language. Other topics discussed articles by included a Kurdish calendar, which was presented in conjunction with, and not in contrast to, an Iranian calendar (see Figure 25).⁵⁵ Along with the work of several other contributors, this group's contribution to such literary journals continued throughout the 1970s. Yet however concerted their efforts were to draw literary attention to Kurdish literature and culture, their works remained limited in scope and reach, lacked institutional support and, thematically, did not transcend an aesthetic analysis of Kurdish literature; they were residual, and mostly introductions to the literature.⁵⁶

Other journals of the era of the White Revolution such as *Sokhan* (Pe. Speech), which claimed to be a literary, scientific and social monthly journal, and *Rahnemay-e Ketab* (Pe. Book Guide), which was a monthly journal of language and literature, research on Iranology and book review run by prominent literary figures such as Iraj Afshar. Developing a core cultural and linguistic position counter to other cultures in Iran, Persian literature was institutionally elevated. This was achieved not only through modern, including higher, education, but also with the support of the new means of communication. Prior to the foundation of radio broadcasting, Nafisi informed others in September 1939 that

[I] had been assigned by the Commission of Radio to collect articles on the history and geography of Iran [...] Because radio was one of the means to disseminate and propagate language and culture and an important factor in introducing Persian literature [...] since its inception, I have regarded radio as a target of [my] scientific and cultural services.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ 'Ubeidulla Ayyubiyān, "Taqwime Mahalliye Kurdi," [The Kurdish Local Calendar], *Nashriyeye Adabiyate Daneshkadeye Tabriz* 16, No. 2 (1343 [1964]).

⁵⁶ Qader Fattahi Qazi, "Chand Baite Kurdi," [Some Kurdish Couplets], *Nashriyeye Adabiyate Daneshkadeye Tabriz [the Journal of the University of Tabriz Faculty of Literature]* 16, No. 3 (1343 [1964]).

⁵⁷ Sajjadi, "Sa'id Nafisi", 361.

Moreover, in a couple of years Nafisi started his *Az Yaddashtha-ye Yek Ostad* (Pe. Notes from a Master) radio programme and then contributed to another programme called *Marzha-ye Danesh* (Pe. the Boundaries of Knowledge).

Within Kurdish society, the modernisation had produced a new generation of Kurdish cultural and political activists who challenged cultural barriers and endeavoured to promote Kurdish literature, crucially by adopting new cultural ideas. Yet dictatorship would put effective restraints on this generation's cultural productions. The intellectualism of the Persian, non-state literary journals, evolved around a literature which enjoyed a hegemonic status elevated systematically by the state through education and the manipulation of the new means of communication. This does not mean that those who run literary journals ignored other literatures' capacities intentionally, or based their literary and intellectual presuppositions on acrimonious narratives. The reason for the marginalisation of other non-Persian literatures was that comparative or cross-cultural analysis they considered outside the purview of their programmes and publications.

Furthermore, we need to bear in mind centuries of reciprocal relationships between Persian and Kurdish literatures and cultures in order to identify mutual benefits each took when one had begun to explore new literary grounds. Throughout the medieval period and the early modern times Persian language had been functioning as a *lingua franca* and formed the basis for religious schools' curriculum, whereas multilingual Kurdish poetry, in contrast to modern, monolingual poetry, emerged throughout the Kurdish region under the suzerainties of the Ottoman and Iranian Empires. Persian literary credentials, combined with political marginalisation of pre-modern Kurdish societies in the Kurdish Emirates or Principalities, helped Persian to continue its higher literary status in the modern nation-state of Iran. It then received state's political support and became hegemonic in the process of the homogenisation. For the nation-state, modernity resulted in nationalisation of history and culture based on distinctive history

and language as two ideological components of nationalism. In this context, an Iranian national narrative, which continued to use 'Iranian' and 'Persian' interchangeably, shaped the Persian literary giants' literary works.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the works of likes of Nafisi inspired Kurdish scholars.

⁵⁸ Sa'id Nafisi's literary works included (national) historiography. Cf. Sa'id Nafisi, *Tarikhe Ejtema'i Wa Siyasiye Iran Dar Doreye Mo'aser* [The Social and Political History of Modern Iran] (Tehran: Ahoura, 1383 [2004]), first published in the summer of 1956; Sa'id Nafisi, *Babak Khorramdin* (Tehran: Asatir, 1384 [2005]), first published in 1954.

نامهای دوازده ماه سال در کردستان و تطبیق با نامهای فارسی و آوستانی و نامهای رومی قدیم

نامهای رومی قدیم	سورانی قدیم	جلال الدین	فارسی باستان	فارسی	نامهای ماهها در کردستان مکرری	کرمانج (ایمکری)	قادر مدرسی	ع - ییزن	دکتر خنجران	بشیر بشیر	دالو و گیمو کرمانجی
حمل	سورانی قدیم	تبرانی	فارس	نوار و اهار = ماه اول بهار	فروردین	بهار، چیت، خنجر، بهار، بهار	چیتان	خاکه لویه	آدار	خودری	دینی بشکان، آخالیوه، نوروز
ثور	نور	گل اور	نار	فروردین	اردیبهشت	یاسر، بهار، بهار، بهار، بهار	گلان	بالتک	گلان	پژمان	بهار، بهار، بهار
جوزا	جوزا	خان پرور	آرت و هشت	اردیبهشت	بهشت بهار، بهار، بهار، بهار	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	ایار	بهشت بهار	چیتان
سرطان	سرطان	گرمایان	گرمایان	خرداد	خرداد	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
اسد	اسد	آش ویز	آش ویز	تیر	تیر	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
سنبله	سنبله	چان ویش	چان ویش	مهر	مهر	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
میران	میران	دژ و خوی	دژ و خوی	شهریور	شهریور	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
غریب	غریب	باران ریز	باران ریز	مهر	مهر	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
قوس	قوس	اندو و گین	اندو و گین	آبان	آبان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
جدی	جدی	سار و ماه	سار و ماه	آذر	آذر	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
دلو	دلو	برن اور	برن اور	دی	دی	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان
حوت	حوت	مشک و نام	مشک و نام	بهمن	بهمن	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان	چیتان

تقویم محلی کردی = Ketijmêrî Herîmî Kurdî

In this calendar, Ayyubiyān presents the names of the months in ancient languages of Avesta, ancient Persian, Syriac, Arabic and modern Kurdish and Persian. Different Kurdish names of the months in this calendar are proposed by six Kurdish authors of whom E. Bizhan's proposed names (the fourth column from right) have become established Kurdish (Sorani) names of month. Source: *The Journal of Tabriz University's Faculty of Literature* (in Persian), No. 2, 1964.

Thematically, as mentioned above, in the era of the White Revolution cultural critics across Iran were mainly distinguished by their treatments of two cultural and social aspects of their society: (1) what they assumed to be Westernisation of 'Iranian culture', reflected in nativist literature or in other literature which criticised rapid cultural changes, and (2) growing social and class disparities, reflected mainly in socialist literature. To this, one must add a state-sponsored or 'royalist' trend towards promoting the modern Iranian nation and state. This trend was represented, for example, by the monthly journal of *Gowhar* [Pe. Essence] dedicated to the literature, art, history, and culture of Iran, published by *Bonyad-e Nikukariy* [Pe. The Centre for Charity] since winter 1973; and *Barresihay-e Tarikhi* (Pe. Historical Analyses), published interestingly by the army's higher command, *Setad-e Bozorg Arteshdaran*, from the summer of 1966.

A common characteristic of these critiques and publications was their emphasis on the significance of the Persian language and 'Iranian' (Persian) culture in conspicuous exclusion of studies of other languages and cultures in modern Iran. Their literary attitudes were at best sympathetic but also culturally incorporative, i.e. Kurdish literature was allowed to be practiced to the extent that it did not challenge the status of Persian literature. There were no rigid literary or institutional instructions to prevent the practice of Kurdish literature but rather boundaries shaped and reshaped by hegemony. The literature in Persian continued to be more widespread and incorporative, producing knowledge to represent Persian's national and official status, whereas Kurdish literature was devoid of such a strategy and platform. Subsequently what is Kurdish was represented by an exclusive literature, revealing that the scope of the practice of Kurdish literature remained within the boundaries of hegemonic culture, on the one hand, and was determined consensually rather than coercively, on the other, because Persian was increasingly perceived as superior, thereby reducing other literatures to the less literary statuses of *mahalli* or 'local' and of *guyesh* or 'dialect'. Based on the contents of various

journals published by Iranian universities' faculties of literature, Kurdish literature found itself effectively in the shadow of Persian literature, whereas sympathetic attitudes towards Kurdish literature were either promotive or conservative—'Kurdish literature' was a phrase used mainly by the Kurdish students of literature and not by, for example, those in charge of the influential literary journals or responsible for the educational curriculum. Therefore, the hegemony of Persian culture created a condition where, to borrow from Raymond Williams, 'residual' (Kurdish) cultural forms faced massive barriers to become 'emergent', i.e. to create new forms to challenge that which was accepted as the norm.⁵⁹ 'Massive barriers' were invisible cultural perceptions, informed by the idea of the superiority of Persian culture, which as a hegemonic culture was not the culture of an outsider, the alien *other*, as was the case with cultural encounters in a colonial context. It was a familiar/partner culture in relation to which, to borrow from Homi K. Bhabha, 'in-between' spaces had continued to produce hybridity and blur cultural boundaries for centuries.⁶⁰

The new means of communication significantly changed this situation because, in addition to the state's political authority and modern education, they constituted the mechanisms needed to ensure Persian cultural hegemony. In an age of widespread illiteracy, the introduction of radio and, crucially, the *visualisation* of broadcasting added a different dimension to culture in general and to modern cultural encounters in particular. A significant effect of this process was the transformation of the framework for social interaction. Giving primacy to these modes of communication does not imply that the written modes such as the above-mentioned journals were insignificant. However, the written mode cannot be placed in a simplified cause and effect relationship with the establishment of the cultural hegemony of Persian because, first and foremost, they reflected a hegemonic process of which they were crucial parts. In contrast, audio and

⁵⁹ Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 40-41.

⁶⁰ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1-18.

visual media, although, according to Williams, described misleadingly as ‘mass’ communication, enabled the ‘transmission [of cultural products] to *individual* homes’,⁶¹ thus obviating the need for both the corporeal presence of the producer and the literacy skills of the receiver as a prerequisite.

⁶¹ Raymond Williams, *Television* (New York: Routledge, 1974), 17. Interestingly for this study focusing on the same period, in the early 1970s Williams conducted research in the United States ‘to describe the relationship between television as a technology and television as a cultural form’. *Ibid.*, p. xiv. As a result, *Television* discussed how TV as a cultural product had become a vital part of American culture.

26. *Cultural encounters in colonial and nation-state contexts: similarities and differences.*

Colonial Contexts	A Multicultural, Nation-State Context (Iran)	
<p>Conquest Maintaining the coloniser's presence</p> <p>Economic (natural resources, market, free labour) Maintaining the Empire's international and regional positions</p> <p>Domination over the natives through institutional and administrative control Exclusion Coercion Exploitation (Congo; the New World) Militarisation</p> <p>The Civilising Mission Rejuvenation of stagnant cultures Neo-colonialism</p> <p>Racial superiority Scientific superiority Intellectual/philosophical superiority Technological superiority</p> <p>Resistance to imperialism as culturally and 'racially' an alien force Nationalism Non-violent/non-cooperation resistance War of independence International alliance Literary resistance The practice of culture</p> <p>Industrialisation to maximise economic exploitation and facilitate effective colonial administration (e.g. rail way; factories) Destruction of the native economy (e.g. spinning and weaving in India) Consumerism</p> <p>Post-colonial state Indirect colonisation (neo-colonialism) through economic, cultural and political means Maintaining scientific and technological superiorities Imposed colonial relationships transform into new conditions such as neo-coloniality or dependency</p>	<p>Mechanisms of (modern) cultural encounters</p> <p>Motivation</p> <p>Forms of control</p> <p>Legitimising ideologies</p> <p>Elements of cultural superiority</p> <p>Forms of resistance</p> <p>Economic attitudes</p> <p>Postcolonial conditions/globalisation-localisation</p>	<p>Modern education Written modes of communication Audio and visual means of communication Physical presence of the state</p> <p>Political: the integration of the state National: safeguarding the superiority of the core-ethnocultural group Territorial</p> <p>Rule over the natives through institutional and administrative control Exclusion Coercion Militarisation Psychological pressure, e.g. by linking political demands to foreign desires</p> <p>Discourses of national unity and territorial integrity Safeguarding the monarchy/Islam Reading natives into the national Mainstream versus local (culture)</p> <p>Persian linguistic and literary superiority Monarchical and imperial pedigree Political centralisation Monopolisation of education and new means of communication Monopolisation of the idea of 'nation', e.g. the idea of 'Iran', to serve the core-ethnocultural community Marginalisation of other cultures Restricting others' access to cultural capital</p> <p>Resistance to an exclusive state Nationalism Armed struggle Cross-ethnic revolutionary activism Literary resistance The practice and production of culture, e.g. music</p> <p>Economic deprivation to prevent economic empowerment (e.g. Iranian Kurdistan, 1921-present) Unequal modernisation and the absence of planned, regional development programmes Unequal distribution of cultural capital, hindering cultural production</p> <p>Increased demands for structural, educational and administrative reforms (e.g. today's Iran) & for cultural rights The idea of local autonomy to empower the 'native' to manage institutions Modernisation strengthens existing historical, socio-economic and cultural bonds between culturally distinct societies and creates new ones</p>

The outbreak of the Second World War coincided with an increase in both radio sets and radio broadcasting in Iran. In addition to audio and written modes, visual modes of communication such as television and cinema, and the number of consumers, had considerably increased by the middle of the 1970s. In 1973 there were 424 cinemas in Iranian urban centres.⁶² According to Amanat, 'filmfarsi competed with foreign imports, both Hollywood and Indian productions, in offering entertainment and moral messages customized for Iranian popular tastes'.⁶³ In 1965 more than two million viewers saw *Ganj-e Qarun* (Qarun's Treasure) movie.⁶⁴ Prior to this, the most important development had been the addition of radio in 1935 to the existing oral and written modes of communication. As discussed in the previous chapters, linguistic homogenisation had effectively restrained publications in Kurdish. However, pervasive illiteracy across Iran meant that only a limited number of people could benefit from the written modes. Therefore, radio compensated not only for this deficiency, but also connected the individual to the outside world, and the radio set became a luxury in both urban and rural areas. However, the unequal modernisation of Iran also sustained the technological chasm between the two areas in the Kurdish region with the effect that most of the rural population remained effectively deprived of not only television, cinema and telephone but written modes of communication, too, even into the 1970s.

In 1977, according to Jahangir Amuzegar, a contemporary economist,

Radio Iran covers 85 per cent of the population [and] Recent technological breakthroughs in transistorizing communications devices have been directly instrumental in bringing radio to most remote towns and villages. There are now more than three million receivers in the country, serving an audience of about 29 million.⁶⁵

⁶² Plan and Budget Organisation, *Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974]*, 143.

⁶³ Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History*, 684.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 125.

Amuzegar highlights as a positive development the key cultural role of radio when its use achieved such an unprecedented scale:

As a result of the widespread popularity of radio in Iran, it has come to be increasingly utilized for public education [...] More important, it has played a key role in preserving and promoting traditional Iranian music and culture. In the meantime, by using Western programs, it has also been instrumental in funnelling *Western knowhow* and technology to Iranian society.⁶⁶

Indeed, the role of radio in public education was seminal. For example, according to contemporary observers, in the early 1960s ‘all available radio broadcasting, including [Kurdish] Radio Sanandaj, were instrumental in promoting public knowledge on matters concerning, for example, agriculture, animal husbandry and hygiene.’⁶⁷ Indeed, local radio stations which broadcast in Kurdish had been founded in the early 1960s culminating in ‘the foundation of Radio Kermanshah which engaged with Kurdish poetry, music and theatre’.⁶⁸ According to another account, with a critical view of Westernisation, ‘between 1335 and 1350 [1956 and 1971], Radio Sanandaj functioned satisfactorily until the quality of its programmes began to decline because of widespread decadence across Iran’.⁶⁹ Although the latter account engages with ‘decadence’ to undermine the modernisation efforts, retrospectively it highlights the religious criticism of modernisation.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Mustafasultani, Interview.

⁶⁸ Biglari, Interview.

⁶⁹ Ayazi, *Sanandaj*, 727. Radio Sanandaj was set up by army personnel and broadcast for one hour per week. Wireless was used to ‘broadcast army news and local music using loudspeakers. People gathered in front of the army base to listen. More advance broadcasting began a few years later, increasing the length of broadcasting from three to four hours per week to 24 hour a day when many individuals began to contribute to the programme. At least until the early 1970s, its most notable aspect was Kurdish music’. Ibid., 724-26.

Kurdish radio programmes were the outcomes of two concurrent processes: firstly, Kurdish cultural activists' continuous endeavours to benefit from the new means of communication; secondly, as discussed below, the state's policy to exploit such means to maintain its authority. Whatever the aim of the state, new means of communication, such as radio, satisfied cultural needs to some extent and encouraged poets and writers to benefit.⁷⁰ As an illustration of this, the aim of Radio Kurdish Kermanshah, which had taken over Radio Tehran's Kurdish programme,

was [to promote the Kurdish movement in] Iraqi Kurdistan [in the 1960s] because of the ongoing conflict between Iran and Iraq. However, the literary individuals, who were employed [to run the programme], aimed at promoting Kurdish culture and language instead. The poet, Swara Ilkhanizada was an example. Teahouses in Kurdish cities were packed with people who had come to listen to radio.⁷¹

The revolutionising effect of the emergence and the expansion of visual transmitting technology should not undermine the role radio played as an audio means of communication before and after the emergence of the visual means of communications for two reasons. First, when expanded, radio also revolutionised communication in a society which was characterised by widespread illiteracy and a predominantly rural population. Before the introduction of radio, itinerant literary figures like Qane', encountered in Part I, travelled and spread knowledge eliciting their recipients' responses in many ways. For example, more interested in oral and written skills, people became more aware of the world, presumably affecting their social interaction.⁷² Secondly, the

⁷⁰ Mustafasultani, Interview.

⁷¹ Biglari, Interview. Radio Kurdish Tehran was founded as a result of efforts by prominent Kurdish individuals such as Shokrolla Baban and Mr Situdeh, a teacher of literature. Ibid.

⁷² Such literary figures or social and political activists of later decades remained influential especially where written, audio and visual means of communication were not available. Another figure is undoubtedly Mala Awara (Mala Ahmad Shalmashi, 1934-68), mentioned above.

availability of Kurdish broadcasting in neighbouring Iraq naturally attracted attention from Iranian Kurds partly for their limited knowledge of Persian and partly as they looked elsewhere for cultural resources. This enhanced the Kurds' interest in *Kurdish* culture and their desire for news about the Kurdish movement in that country too. The relatively free practice of the Kurdish language in modern Iraq, allowed for political reasons, discussed in Part I, and probably the desires of successive Iraqi governments to appeal to Iranian Kurds, made Radio Kurdish Baghdad very popular. According to several oral history accounts, Radio Baghdad broadcast the works of prominent poets such as Goran, and this had cultural impact on the listeners, who also reacted to broadcasts of political writings, news from Vietnam, China and Cuba, and even to obituaries. An example of this was [Radio Baghdad's] commemoration of Che Guevara after he had been captured and then executed [in Bolivia] in 1967.⁷³

Moreover, using Kurdish as a political tool in the tension between Iran and the Arab world, Radio Cairo also broadcast in Kurdish memorably the song *Azhdahak* along with other Kurdish songs by the famous Kurdish singer, Salih Dilan.⁷⁴ Written modes too fell victim to this tension. In retaliation, the Iranian government founded the *Kurdistan* newspaper in the 1960s, targeting Kurds in Iraq, which mirrored regional clashes of interest. However, Kurdish literary activists used the paper to promote Kurdish culture by publishing Kurdish poems and articles, in the same way that, for example, Amir Hassanpour, the future professor of Kurdish language and history, participated in Swara Ilkhanizada's regular series *Tapo w Boomalell* (The Shadow and the Misty Land) on Tehran Kurdish Radio.⁷⁵ Simultaneously, Radio Kurdish Kermanshah managed to elicit

⁷³ Biglari, Interview; Amini, Interview, Kaiwan, Interview

⁷⁴ Biglari, Interview.

⁷⁵ Ibid. The editor of *Kurdistan* was Muhammad Sediq Muftizadeh and its owner was 'Abdulhamid Ba'idulzamani, a professor of Arabic. It is believed that Pezhman, a SAVAK employee in Tehran, was responsible for the Kurdish section of Radio Tehran. Ibid. Swara Ilkhanizada (1937-1976) was a gifted poet whose life was cut short in a tragic car accident. He graduated from Tehran University in 1968 with a degree in law and worked at the Kurdish service of Radio Tehran since 1968.

responses from different parts of the Kurdish region. Indeed, its *Karwan-i She'r w Musiqā* (Ku. the Caravan of Poetry and Music), broadcast at the end of the 1960s, was so popular that, as a teacher recalls, 'we [as listeners] participated by sending pieces of Kurdish poetry, and poets such as Fateh Muhammadi contributed by sending their poetry'.⁷⁶

Therefore, although *indirectly* promoted by the state, radio broadcasting in Kurdish in Iran played a crucial role in advancing *Kurdayeti*. Individuals began to interact, albeit in a one-way communication, regardless of time and space. Although the implications of this new form of interaction were manifold, radio primarily transformed the recipients' perceptions of the world. According to eyewitness accounts, returning seasonal workers brought radio sets back to their villages during the 1970s, in this way, connecting the village to the outside world by increasing the availability of technology.⁷⁷ Its first impact was the instigation of regular daily meetings of village inhabitants around the radio at specific times to listen to, for example, Radio BBC-Persian, Radio Tehran or Radio Baghdad. The state utilised radio to exert political influence and pursue its homogenising policies. However, this elicited cultural resistance to preserve Kurdish culture and language and thus radio promoted Kurdish identity, too.

Television and Cinema

Television stations were first established in Iran as private ventures. The Iranian government granted concessions to private companies which established the first television broadcasting systems in Tehran in 1958 and Abadan in 1960. State owned organisations followed suit, leading to the centralisation of television broadcasting by the early 1970s:⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Amini, Interview.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ On this see Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 125; Hamid Nafisi, "Cinema as a Political Instrument," in Ali M. Ansari (ed.), *Politics of Modern Iran* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 192.

In 1966 the state owned National Iranian TV was inaugurated. Later on, the government purchased the two private stations [...] and established the Iran National Iranian Radio Organization, an independent agency to the government. In 1971 the two independent radio and television organizations were merged into one administrative unit called the National Iranian Radio Television Organisation (NIRT), to speed up and facilitate balanced expansion of the mass communications networks in the country.⁷⁹

The number of major television production and transmission centres increased to 15 by 1976. Of these, two were stationed in Tehran and the rest were stationed in provincial centres or cities, including one in each of the predominantly or partly Kurdish cities of Sanandaj, Mahabad and Kermanshah.⁸⁰ These three stations proved to be more imitative than original because they had limited hours and programmes in local languages and their programmes were no match for those which were broadcasted by the main stations in Tehran. According to one oral account, ‘in 1971 Sanandaj TV began its work by rebroadcasting Tehran TV’s programmes which, except for [the Iranian TV series] *Talkh wa Shirin* [Pe. Bitter and Sweet] and *Morad Barqi*, were westernised’.⁸¹ NIRT had impressive coverage for its three main programmes of Nationwide, Second Programme and International by 1976, as Amuzegar rightly predicted:

At the end of 1976 the International Program broadcast eight hours per day. The Nationwide program covered 10 per cent [of the population]. Late in 1976, also, color television broadcast was introduced on regular channels. By the end of the Fifth Plan [in 1978], the Nationwide Program will cover 80 per cent of the population, and the Second Program will reach 50 per cent of the people.⁸²

⁷⁹ Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 125-26.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁸¹ Ayazi, *Sanandaj*, 727. *Talk wa Shirin* was a popular, somewhat comic TV series which told the story of the middle class families in their struggle to come to terms to the ‘modern’ way of life.

⁸² Amuzegar, *Iran: An Economic Profile*, 126.

Television's remarkable impact on the population could be seen in the way its programmes quickly became popular. The programmes mainly consisted of 'Western classical music, biographies of important personalities and popular American and British series dubbed in Persian, as well as several indigenous series'.⁸³ At the same time, a new industry evolved and expanded the market for television sets. 'The estimated number of television receivers in March 1976 was over 1,000,000 of which half a million sets were in Tehran'.⁸⁴ Television rapidly became popular, revolutionising social interactions in a different manner from radio. People who had gathered to *listen* to radio now gathered to *watch* and consume messages and their content visually and more profoundly. As scholars have noted, television replaced the traditional (Persian) *naqqal* or (Kurdish) *bait-bezh* (storyteller) of teahouses.⁸⁵ In the Kurdish region radio had already replaced *bait-bezh* and, according to Amir Hassanpour, threatened Kurdish folklore more widely.⁸⁶ According to a survey conducted in 1974, the most popular programmes were either foreign series, or what some would call 'Westernised' local series.⁸⁷ 'Westernised' was a vague term which was used to describe films and television series the content of which created tensions with religious or nativist views, but also engaged the population with new ideas. By 1979 more people acquired TV, and it became very influential in 'implementing the state's cultural policy [of Westernisation]'.⁸⁸

Despite the fact that it was the capital and other urban centres which primarily benefited from the availability of television, and regardless of their limited availability per household, television exerted great psychological effect on individuals' minds. Unmatched by any other means of communication in terms of the speed and range of

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 127.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁸⁶ Amir Hassanpour, "Farhangi Zaraki Le Khuli Teknolozhiy Zamanda," [Oral Culture in the Age of Technology], <http://en.calameo.com/read/0011170694fd3b13133a7>, accessed 6 November 2017.

⁸⁷ Nafisi, "Cinema as a Political Instrument", 205

⁸⁸ Ibid.

impact, television re-oriented social focus and made people regulate their social lives around the new programmes or series.

Indeed, because of the novelty of television, its visual effectiveness and the state's centralisation of radio and television broadcasting, powerful narratives shaped perceptions, determined cultural practices and blocked other narratives from forming and emerging. For example, while favourable images of the United States of America and its history were (re)produced in many ways, including through television series and movies, no critical knowledge of that country's formation or the lives of its indigenous and black population were provided. Instead, *sorkh-pust* [Pe. red-skins], a new term to describe Native Americans, was juxtaposed with stereotypical cowboys—interestingly, no Kurdish term for *sorkh-pust* was coined. As a result, an inferior image of the former, against a progressive image of the latter, was institutionalised. As Barahani observed at the time, 'America has managed to project such an [inferior] image of the natives that it encouraged the natives to support America and oppose themselves'.⁸⁹ Similarly, movies telling the stories of Europe's colonisation of Africa and India depicted the conquerors as the missionaries of civilisation in the 'remote' places of the world, where the natives presumably struggled to come to terms with the new age. Indeed, the greatest success of such movies took place in the colonised world or in rapidly westernising non-Western countries.⁹⁰

The crucial aspect of this production of knowledge was the link between culture and power, which produced narratives to maintain the cultural superiority of the powerful by confirming that superiority.⁹¹ Television had the primary role in the Westernisation of Iranian culture(s) neglecting any critical reading of 'Western' cultural products, on the

⁸⁹ Barahani, *Tarikhe Mozakkar*, 88.

⁹⁰ Ibid.; Nafisi, "Cinema as a Political Instrument".

⁹¹ Edward Said explains this link between culture and imperialism. See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiii.

one hand, and paying no heed to worldwide intellectual debates pertaining to a critical understanding of the world, on the other hand.

Meanwhile, Iran was rapidly acquiring greater intellectual and literary capacities in relevant spheres because of ongoing literary and intellectual transformations. In addition to journals, translation of foreign novels increased, as did the number of new male and female writers.⁹² This was matched by an increase in public interest in reading. A significant embodiment of this period was the formation of Kanun-e Nevisandegan-e Iran (Centre for Iranian Writers) in 1968, which was suppressed after only two years.⁹³ As Hassan 'Abedini's study of story-writing in Iran rightly observes, this literary transformation 'was a result of social transformation, the emergence of intellectual groups amid the obstruction of political and social activities';⁹⁴ following a process since the Coup, Iran had eventually become an outright dictatorship by 1970.⁹⁵ Nativism and Marxism stood out as two intellectual trends which, reflecting the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of modernisation, assist us to delineate the context in which cultural encounters through new means of communication took place. Intense Westernisation surfaced a prominent, diverse intellectual trend in Iran, which advocated a return to 'cultural purity'. Literary works, with different conclusions, and which remained either unpublished or suppressed by the state, reflected superbly this cultural encounter between the Western and Iranian (Persian) cultures. For instance, Barahani's *Tarikh-e Mozakkar* to a great extent registered the intensity of Westernisation in urban centres, along with its effects on various layers of the population.⁹⁶ Likewise, though coming to more radical conclusions, Jalal Ale Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* (Pe. Westoxication) could only be written in climate of intensive Westernisation that Iran had begun to

⁹² Hassan Mir 'Abedini, *Sad Sal Dastan Newisi Dar Iran* [One Hundred Year Story-Writing in Iran] (Tehran: Nashre Cheshme, 1377 [1998]), 408-09.

⁹³ Ibid., 418.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 408.

⁹⁵ For more on this period see ibid., 405-21.

⁹⁶ Cf. Barahani, *Tarikhe Mozakkar*, Ch. 10.

experience especially since 1960. These works, especially the latter, had their origins in the works of some other intellectuals such as Fakhreddin Shademan (1907-1967) and Ahmad Fardid (1904-1994) who is believed to have invented the term *gharbzadegi*, and reflected a growing form of reactionary nativism to safeguard 'cultural purity'. While Shademan and Fardid had formulated its historical and philosophical foundations, it was due to Ale Ahmad's work, as Mehrzad Boroujerdi argues, that the concept became a discourse to oppose the West's cultural onslaught.⁹⁷ According to Dariush Ashuri, a well-known literary critique, 'we were preoccupied with this discourse [of Westernisation] [...] and obsessed with the search for the lost East'.⁹⁸ Moreover, in the sphere of more explicit political opposition with a violent undertone, Ali Shari'ati, an ideologue of the Islamic Revolution, symbolised the return to cultural roots through more explicit political opposition. Alternatively, a secular, Left-wing discourse had been forming by other literary groups, including those publishing literary journals and members of Centre for Iranian Writers who defied the Shah's dictatorship and preserved a kind of Iranian 'Enlightenment thought'.⁹⁹ To this we can add social and political activists who attempted to interpret social change, dictatorship and an advancing capitalist imperialism by social theories dominated by Marxism. Indeed, while counter-narratives' access to new means of communication was regularly blocked, publishers circumvented censorship and, therefore, translated books or other modes of writing reached the curious individuals; another effective means of communication was the cassette. The 1979 Revolution was also characterized by an explosion of book publishing, and according to the same study, 'unprecedented in the history of Iran, around one hundred million books were published in 1979'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 54-63.

⁹⁸ Dariush Ashuri, *Ma Wa Moderniyat* [We and Modernity] (Tehran: Tolou' Azadi, 1998), seven.

⁹⁹ See Mas'oud Noqrekar, *Bakhsi Az Tarikhe Jonbeshe Rowshanfekrie Iran* [A Part of the Enlightenment History of Iran], Vol. 1 (Sweden: Baran, 1382 [2002-3]), 24.

¹⁰⁰ 'Abedini, *Sad Sal Dastan Newisi Dar Iran*, 420.

Analysis of cultural encounters are abundant. These are, however, analyses of the encounters of a different nature, namely those that took place between fundamentally distinct cultures such as between Europeans and Native Americans or the British and Indians. A closer analogy to Persian and Kurdish cultural encounters is Ireland. Scholars of Irish historiography and cultural studies warn that a homogenising and monolithic approach to Irish [including Northern Ireland] history and culture is misleading, and they draw attention to the misconception that 'Ireland's position was or is exactly the same as that of all Britain's African, Asian or Caribbean colonies'.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Ireland is not to be seen simply as a 'colony', indeed it seems there is an ongoing debate about to what degree the British Empire perceived 'Irish questions as colonial'.¹⁰² Therefore, as Stephen Howe gives a detailed account of these debates, themes of Irishness versus Englishness, language, race, and culture continue to form historiographical and cultural debates.¹⁰³ However, there are many aspects of the cultural encounters between the British Empire and Ireland which distinguish this relationship from the one between Kurdish and Persian cultures. First and foremost, a colonial context formed British and Irish cultural encounters in a massive scale, followed by the issue of race, empire and nationalism, colonialist structure of imagery, followed by the fact, unlike the case of the Kurds, that Ireland became a state in a 'postcolonial' world, probably a former partner and/or victim of Empire but definitely a new partner of Europe. If the analogy is closer in terms of language, cultural nationalism and cultural hegemony, both a colonial or imperial context and the existence of an Irish state indicate more differences than similarities. Finally, the widespread application of postcolonial theories of Edward Said's or Homi K. Bhabha's to analyse Ireland history and culture does not merely stem from a methodological fault,

¹⁰¹ Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 139.

¹⁰² Ibid., 230.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ibid., Ch. 7; Stephen Howe, "Historiography," in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

which views Ireland as a ‘colony’.¹⁰⁴ The point is, as Howe confirms in the case of Ireland, that postcolonial theories are necessary but inadequate because Ireland was not merely a colony.

Mechanisms of cultural encounters in colonial contexts are identified as conquests and direct colonisation.¹⁰⁵ However, mechanisms of cultural encounters differ in non-colonial, multicultural contexts in which one culture assumes cultural hegemony over others. The Persian and Kurdish cultures found themselves in a new historical context in modern Iran. They had historically lived in close geographical and cultural proximity prior to the formation of the modern Iranian nation-state which institutionally and politically endorsed the Persian culture and language. This was followed by the proliferation of new audio and visual means of communication in the second half of the twentieth century, which effectively transformed (pre-modern) political-cultural authority of Persian into a cultural hegemony in Gramscian sense. While they were linguistically familial and culturally resembled one another, these two peoples’ cultural practices in many ways were based on common historical and mythological origins. Therefore, this compels us to explain a situation in which a culture’s more distinctive characteristics (e.g. language, custom, and religion) assume superiority over its surrounding cultures with which it shares cultural resources. In our case, the Persian culture used its administrative experience and cultural prestige to assume cultural hegemony with the proliferation of both institutionalised and centralised means of communication.

To elaborate on these claims, the following discussion benefits from Raymond William’s theory of communication as a means for cultural formation and production. First, his idea of ‘complexity of hegemony’ advances Gramscian perception of hegemony which ‘is not to be understood at the level of mere opinion or mere manipulation. It is a

¹⁰⁴ For more on this see Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, Ch. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 162-65.

whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understanding of the nature of man and of his world.¹⁰⁶ Secondly, he highlights a ‘central system of practices, meaning and values, which we can properly call dominant and effective’.¹⁰⁷ And crucial to our discussion of Kurdish and Persian modern cultural encounters is his notion of ‘residual’ culture, i.e. some cultural and social forms that continue to live in spite of the cultural hegemony of the other, and ‘emergent’ culture, i.e. the creation of new cultural meanings, values and practices which explicitly defies the hegemonic culture.¹⁰⁸ This leads us to the notions of ‘residual-incorporated’ and ‘residual not incorporated’, and ‘emergent-incorporated’ and ‘emergent not incorporated’¹⁰⁹ based on which we can understand why residual Kurdish cultural forms, e.g. music and clothing, are incorporated into the dominant culture but emergent cultural forms, e.g. in literature and education, are suppressed by it. For these reasons, Williams’ theory and explanation of culture is immensely useful to understand Kurdish and Persian cultural encounters.

Postcolonial theories provide valuable cultural insights for evaluating cultural encounters in our case. Within these theories and studies, one can include subaltern studies. However, as argued throughout this chapter, Kurdish and Persian cultural encounters in modern times, in general, and in the age of visualisation of media, in particular, did not take place in a *colonial* context nor did these cultures perceive each other as alien. In addition to this, the Kurds have been partners in empire building, and later also in nation-building, though they did not reap the main benefit of such processes. Therefore, it is necessary to identify other mechanisms of establishing cultural hegemony beyond colonial conquest.

In the history of Iran, the main mechanism of cultural encounter was the exertion of political and military dominance of successive ruling dynasties of Iran on Kurdish

¹⁰⁶ Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, 38.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 41.

ruling families, Emirates or principalities, which also preserved distinct cultural characteristics of their Kurdish subjects. This situation changed during the middle of the nineteenth century when the process of the modernisation of state and society also meant the transformation of the Kurds into modern *aqaliat-e qaumi* (Pe. ethnic minority). Since the expansion of the Islamic civilisation in the seventh century, ruling families of Iran were comprised of dynasties with Arabic, Persian, and then Turkish origins until the modern Iranian nation-state made the Persian community the core ethno-cultural community of modern Iran. Historically, Persian had been a *lingua franca* and cultural practices overlapped without defining others as ‘ethnic minority’. There were forms of cultural domination of course, but the distinction between pre-modern and modern times could be seen in the use of Persian by the Ottoman ruling family or by ethnic Kurdish literary figures throughout the early modern times.

In contrast to the mechanism of conquest or the presence of the state in pre-modern times, the mechanism of *modern* cultural encounters sustained relation of domination through cultural hegemony. Simply put, this refers to a situation in which the ruling culture is incarnated in *unmanned* technical means and, as set out by Foucault, this power becomes non-corporeal, i.e. it does not engage in physical confrontation. Although the modern Iranian nation-state had been promoting Persian language and culture since its formation, the political and military prowess of the state ensured that non-Persian cultural practices were curbed or incorporated into the ‘main’ culture. For example, as discussed in Part II, throughout the reign of Reza Shah, Kurdish language was banned and cultural practices were restricted through the coercive force of the gendarmerie. The heavy presence of the state was needed to implement the Pahlavi dress code and for the surveillance of individuals engaged in oppositional actions. The corporeal presence of the state diminished as its favoured cultural practices, e.g. the dress codes for teachers in schools and civil servants, became norms. In this regard, socio-economic transformation

of Iran was crucial. By the early 1940s, there was already an expanding educated urban generation, which had emerged as a result of modern education, urbanisation and the expansion of economy. However, the state still needed its heavy presence to provide political authority for the cultural practices it favoured. The state's non-corporeal presence permeated widely as modern education expanded and publications reached more people. Moreover, in the second half of the century the state's authority was substituted for the Kurdish *agha* or the landowner class. However, the pace and scope of these processes were slow and limited. For example, modern education was socially significant as a mode of cultural incorporation of others and its institutions, defined by Williams 'as the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture',¹¹⁰ were recognised as an effective and necessary way towards cultural homogenisation in Iran—literacy was achieved through Persian. However, because of its novelty and uneven expansion, modern education could not have achieved a hegemonic scale with the same speed as the new visual means of communication would later obtain. As noted in the previous chapter, in the early 1960s, 70 to 80 percent of Iran's 20 to 21 million population was still illiterate, a fact disadvantageous to Persian cultural hegemony—thus inspiring the idea of the Literacy Corps. Therefore, cultural hegemony stipulated the transition from corporeal to non-corporeal cultural power, which truly took off with the proliferation of the technical and visual means of communication in the 1960s and particularly in the 1970s, creating conditions for Persian culture to achieve such an unprecedented hegemonic status. In Gramscian terms, hegemony refers to the maintenance of authority through consent or the acceptance of 'the norm' through consent rather than coercion. In this process, hegemonic ideas and practices, i.e. those supported and propagated by the ruling or superior culture, become common sense or norms, while other cultures were simultaneously condemned to the margin. Raymond Williams elaborates this Gramscian

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 39.

perception of hegemony by applying 'a central, effective and dominant system of meanings and values which are not merely abstract but which are organized and lived'.¹¹¹

He maintains,

That is why hegemony is not to be understood at the level of mere opinion or mere manipulation. It is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, or ordinary understanding of the nature of man and of his world. [...] It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society. A sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.¹¹²

Therefore, the era of the White Revolution becomes culturally significant for its mediatization of culture and creating the conditions to constitute 'reality'. Crucially, this process simultaneously reproduces conditions for cultural resistance to defy the hegemonic culture. However, taking Williams into consideration, two points must be highlighted. First, the hegemonic culture develops capacities to tolerate and incorporate difference and opposition. Nevertheless, once cultural hegemony is established coercion does not disappear but remains to be applied when the dominant system is *challenged* by an alternative. Until then, one can defy dominant ideas but still be incorporated in the dominant system, which, as noted above, does not amount to mere ideas but to organised meanings and values. Moreover, some modes of opposition become incorporated so that 'whatever the degree of internal conflicts and internal variations, they do not go in practice beyond the central effective and dominant definitions'.¹¹³ This was the case with the Kurdish university students and academics in the 1960s and 1970s whose literary writings, valuable as they were, did not challenge the boundaries of the dominant culture. This was one reason why the hegemonic culture tolerated such practices. Secondly,

¹¹¹ Raymond Williams, "From Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," in Kernan Ryan (ed.), *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1996), 23.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 24.

different views of the world may be expressed while a hegemonic perception, which is cultivated through modern education and ostensibly disseminates objective knowledge, continues to nurture those who have expressed doubt. This has a bearing on internal variations in reaction to events and their impact on one's understanding of the world. For example, individuals may criticise the harsh conditions of colonisation but continue to hold a racial conception of the world, relying on a binary opposition of primitive versus developed to explain historical phenomena. Again, while an argument for the superiority of the Medes over the Achaemenes in ancient Iran is permitted, the representation of the Medes as the origin of a 'Kurdish nation' by Kurdish national historiography will evoke fierce reaction from the dominant culture. 'Kurdistan Province', though as an act of re-division of the Kurdish region in the west of Iran, discussed in Part II, is formed and tolerated by the modern state as an act of sustaining the perception of the Kurds as an inextricable component of Iran and Iranian identity. However, the idea of 'Kurdistan' as an independent entity challenges the effective dominant system. This provokes coercion, explaining the continuous corporeal presence of the state. Kurdish cultural practices during the Pahlavi era were tolerated to the extent that they did not pose any threat to what was deemed the *official*, which safeguarded "national unity". So long as these variations are incorporated, they pose no danger to the dominant system. Ultimately, 'the dominant culture itself changes, not in central formation, but in many of its articulated features'.¹¹⁴ In fact, in modern society it always needs to change to remain dominant. This situation changes when different views began to defy the effective dominant culture and mutate into an alternative. In our case, *Kurdayeti* in modern Iran has continued as an alternative to the hegemonic culture.

The above analysis explains why Persian cultural hegemony was effectively established in the era of the White Revolution as a result of the proliferation of the new

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 28.

means of communication. It also sheds light on the dominant discourses, the centrality of which continues in spite of conscientious critiques directed against them. '*Sorkh-pust*' alludes to the production of nomenclature in modern cultural encounters which popularises new terms in the dominant culture's language.

Finally, in the specific historical and social contexts of this era, especially throughout the 1970s, the institutionalisation and management of new means of communication, especially television, cinema and radio, took place in a two-pronged process. First, as discussed above, Iranian cultures became increasingly targets of 'Westernisation' and new ideas, though there were different cultural reactions. For example, unlike the centre, Nativism as a movement for cultural purity and a reaction to Westernisation did not become very relevant to the Kurds for various religious, ethnic and political reasons. The second process pertains not only to the way that Westernisation was mediated by Persian cultural medium and hence restricted understanding because of linguistic barriers, but also to the way that new means of communication proved to be effective tools to serve homogenisation of culture based on *Persian* culture. This resulted simultaneously in the institutionalisation of the Persian language and culture as *the* norm, 'mainstream' or 'official' (*rasmi*), and in the marginalisation of Kurdish culture, which was defined as *mahalli* (Pe. local). This mainstream-local binary concealed both the homogenising nature of this enterprise, and its marginalising effect on other cultures. As an illustration of this, the new monopolised means of communication realised cultural consent by making Persian the normal medium of communication, the normal educational means for social and economic success, and the normal way of achieving, in Bourdieu's terms, various forms of cultural capital and intellectual prosperity for individuals.¹¹⁵ All this took place to the detriment of other cultures in Iran.

¹¹⁵ On various forms of cultural capital (embodied, objectified and institutionalised), see Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital".

THE PAHLAVIS' UNEQUAL CULTURAL MODERNISATION

The cultural consequences of modernisation of Iran also included the enrichment of cultural resources to transform perceptions and promote cultural awareness. As argued above, the contribution of a new educated generation across Iran to this transformation, especially since the Second World War, was integral. This was reflected by a multi-faceted culture of change represented by a wide range of journals and the cultural products of academics, writers and activists, some in ministerial posts. However, the state's distribution of cultural resources remained unequal because the White Revolution's unequal modernisation was not confined to socio-economic spheres. This seemed to benefit the preservation of the targeted non-Persian cultures, which had come into a new way of contact with a hegemonic culture. In reality, however, while the expansion of modern education in Kurdish rural areas was limited and written modes of communication faced the formidable barrier of widespread illiteracy, the enrichment of cultural resources in Iran could have benefited all Iranian cultures because it involved new ideas and literary forms which would defy conventional ways of life. The inferior social status of women was a case in point. This becomes more evident when one considers the state's inability to deal with aspects of customs or traditions, which as cultural fetters continued to bind many layers of Kurdish society to undesirable ways of life. Therefore, a major shortcoming of the state-led modernisation was its failure to provide an equal distribution of new means of communication and establish cultural venues and centres such as theatre, library and other centres related to the promotion of *Farhang wa Honar* (Pe. Culture and Art). But individuals did not necessarily receive transmitted 'message' passively. Interaction with audio and visual means of communication as well as transmitted ideas, as argued in this chapter, transformed the framework of social interaction. Eventually, it was a specific culture and language that succeeded in monopolising cultural resources and means of communication with the institutionalised and political endorsement of the state.

Therefore, the state's unequal distribution of cultural resources constituted other complementing aspects of cultural encounters. At the same time, the provision of Kurdish cultural resources was restrained with the effect that the level of the existing literary works or radio and television services in Kurdish were no match for those in Persian broadcasted on a massive scale.

Custom and Traditions

Cultural disparity between city and village. City-village disparity extended to cultural realms too. As discussed in the previous chapter, the village was by and large left out of technological modernisation. Although the state replaced the landowner class as the sole political authority, it did not become the provider of technological needs nor in this case, of cultural needs of the population in rural areas. Except for radio, which became gradually available in limited numbers, the Kurdish village was deprived of visual or written means of communication, let alone cinema, until the end of the 1970s. Concurrently, homogenising educational and media policies stipulated Persian linguistic skills for individuals to become educated, gain more economic prosperity and benefit from various cultural modes of communication and entertainment. Moreover, both widespread rural illiteracy and the 'remoteness' of the village, an image sustained by unavailability of transportation and roads for innumerable villages, aggravated the situation by restricting effective access to cultural resources. Although the content was not necessarily objective, as illustrated above, being deprived of new ways to engage with cultural activities and encountering a different language, debilitated individuals' intellectual capacities. Nevertheless, the promotion of cultural awareness or initiating positive social change in rural areas was not the aim of the state. Except for its unsteady land reform and limited attempts to expand modern education and healthcare, throughout the 1970s there was no organised attempt by the state to promote cultural awareness in the rural areas. This was mainly because of the absence of provincial development

programmes in the state's successive development plans, which were primarily urban-oriented and aimed to project a progressive, 'Western' image of a new Iran. Indeed, the national image of Iran invited culturally homogenising policies enforced through education and, later more effectively, visual means of communication, which demonstrates the vitality of the new means of communication for the assertion of Persian cultural hegemony in modern, mediasised Iran.

The village's deprivation of new cultural means was mainly due to the state's indifference to motivating cultural change and its obsession with security and superficial aspects of development and Persianisation, which had many consequences for rural communities. Most importantly, social customs and traditions, which were based on patriarchal or unequal class relations, continued unchallenged; such relations of power were reproduced at the expense of less-privileged groups within the village population, most notably among women and the lower strata. Moreover, with the intensification of modernisation between 1960 and 1979, people from rural communities, in general, found themselves caught up with modernisation's unfavourable social and economic consequences which forced them to engage in migration, seasonal work and menial urban labour and urban poverty (see the previous chapters). With no technology in sight for rural women in particular, they continued to bear the burden of both domestic tasks and free labour while their access to social, educational and medical advice was barred by religious and traditional forces. The only effective link between the rural areas and the process of cultural change was established by urban social and political activists who, as teachers or medics, went the extra mile to engage more actively with the rural population, and passed to them the new ideas, which defied such relations of power. According to oral history, discussed in more detail in the previous chapters, although the state paved the way for modern education and healthcare to spread in rural areas, it was mostly teachers, adhering to the humanitarian ideas of the time that walked this extra mile. In

contrast, the state did not intend to impose extra humanitarian tasks on the Literacy Corps except for the urge to spread literacy. Indeed, the expansion of modern education and healthcare in Kurdish rural areas were limited. The effect of this was that, by the end of the 1970s, rural areas had not fundamentally changed in two decades. It is precisely in such circumstances that the role of non-state agents of change in the promotion of social and cultural awareness of people must be recognised.

The growing cultural chasm between Kurdish urban and rural areas was evident, for example, in the institutions of marriage and family. In the end of the 1970s, the village society was still characterised by customs of *zhin ba zhin* (Ku. woman for woman) and 'engagement from birth'. In the former, two lovers' a love-match engagement was only permitted if the man's family was able to give a daughter in marriage to a man in the woman's family. In this exchange, the other couple had to marry against their will. The latter custom allowed the engagement of girls and boys from birth. These customs corresponded either to the existing patriarchal system or served economic needs of a household. In contrast, throughout the 1970s Kurdish urban centres witnessed the emergence of a new generation of educated women who also entered employment on a wide scale (see Chapter 6).¹¹⁶ This was a result of a change in the perception of individuals, and the availability of cultural resources, something which conspicuously remained absent in Kurdish rural areas. Undoubtedly, the return of seasonal workers or students to the village brought back new ideas. However, the absence of the new means of communication, among many other things, restricted the scope and pace of cultural change in rural areas. In cultural terms, too, the White Revolution remained an urban phenomenon.

Cultural Modernisation

¹¹⁶ Gulrokh Qubadi, "Women and the White Revolution," interview with author, September 20, 2017.

Modernisation, the expansion of the economy and modern education intertwined with the proliferation of written, audio and visual means of communication (see Figure 27). The concentration of the means of communication and cultural resources in the capital and its surrounding cities is juxtaposed with their limited availability in the peripheral province of Kurdistan to clarify the situation. The quantities for cinemas, theatres or libraries did not witness any significant change by the end of the 1970s. The first cinemas in Kurdish cities were technologically rudimentary. However, bigger cities distinguished themselves for their cinemas, which became more popular throughout the 1970s. This concentration applied to radio and television broadcasting, too, with the additional problem of the scarcity of programmes in Kurdish, which could not match Persian programmes in length or quality. One significant cultural effect of this was that Kurdish broadcasting was too paralysed to compete with a powerful, homogenising Persian. The table below demonstrates the near non-existence of publications in Kurdish in terms of written modes of communications such as newspapers and magazines. Moreover, the decrease in the publication of such modes across Iran corresponded to the ascendancy of dictatorship and the increase in censorship – in official statistics total numbers for 1964 and 1973 are 207 and 195 respectively, indicating a downward trend in publication. In contrast to political upheavals during which a degree of freedom was allowed to Kurdish publications of many forms, the era of the White Revolution imposed a strict surveillance regime, while the state's oppressive apparatus became more sensitive to Kurdish cultural activities. As a result, literary works, such as Hemin's *Tarik w Run*, were published outside Iran and distributed clandestinely along with other Kurdish publications. This applied across Iran, where the number of books and interest in reading had increased, especially among university students,¹¹⁷ but censorship affected the publication and distribution of books that were labelled as subversive. In almost all cases the reason for the detention of Kurdish

¹¹⁷ Biglari, Interview.

individuals by SAVAK in the 1970s related to possessing Kurdish publications, some mere poetry, which were deemed revolutionary.

During the era of the White Revolution 'new' theatres in bigger Kurdish cities emerged to some extent. It was relatively new and in spite of admirable individual endeavours, the lack of state support and the increasing dictatorship of the 1970s hindered its artistic advance. The history of modern theatrical activities went back to the early 1940s.¹¹⁸ Historically, celebrations of important days such as Nowruz were accompanied by theatrical performances such as *Miri Nowrozi* (Ku. the Nowruz Prince) who symbolically ruled over a town or village and replaced their rulers during Nowruz.¹¹⁹ As Ayyubian noted in the early 1960s,

Those National celebration (*Jashnhay-e melli*) in Kurdistan, and especially in Mahabad, are celebrated with utmost enthusiasm. The residents of Mahabad give national and local (*mahalli*) flavour to religious days and celebrate them more enthusiastically than other Muslims do. For example, [on such days] they visit each other and celebrate the day by special ceremonies [...] There is no custom of *marsi-ye khaniy* (lamentation ceremony) in Mahabad'.¹²⁰

Such non-religious dramatic performances provided conditions for the advancement of artistic activities, especially the new theatre. However, political oppression remained a constant obstacle. For example, 'by 1936, the celebration of *Miri Nowrozi* had declined until suddenly it was celebrated magnificently in 1945. In spite of powers hidden in ambush, *Miri Nowrozi* rule[d] Mahabad for fifteen days without causing any disorder whatsoever'.¹²¹ However, the decline of *Miri Nowroz* celebrations continued until it was eventually replaced by similar performances, which amounted to short, amusing plays,

¹¹⁸ 'Omar Faruqi, *Nazari Be Tarikh Wa Farhange Saqqez* [A Glance at Saqqez's Culture and History] (Muhammadi Publication: Saqqez, 1369 [1991]), 163.

¹¹⁹ 'Ubaidulla Ayyubian, "Mire Nowruzi," [The Nowruz Prince], *Nashriyeye Adabiyate Daneshkadeye Tabriz* 14, No. 1 (Bahar 1341 [Spring 1962]), 102.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹²¹ Ibid., 111-12.

while the threat of political reprisals and lack of state support remained constant obstacles.

Meanwhile, new theatrical performances increased with the expansion of modern education.¹²² According to oral accounts, Saqqez city epitomised the way theatrical production increased by secondary school students and other educational or military individuals. The latter for example, used opportunities such as the state's celebration of 28 Mordad (the coup against Musaddeq, 19 Aug. 1953), 21 Azar (the enthronement of Reza Shah on 12 Sep. 1925) or 6 Bahman (the referendum day for the White Revolution, 26 Jan. 1963) to perform plays of different types.¹²³ Introducing branches of *Farhang wa Honar* in 1971 to bigger cities, including Saqqez, in the Kurdistan Province boosted theatrical activities by organising music and theatre groups, while 'some experts [in theatre] were dispatched by Iran's Centre for Theatre to train young enthusiasts'.¹²⁴ Plays such as *Jan Nesar* (Sacrificer) written by Bizhan Mufid was performed. A notable aspect of theatre in Kurdish cities was the emergence of young artists who pursued theatre as a distinct artistic field, composed plays and performed them with the least financial support and in poor facilities.¹²⁵

This trend reveals that modern theatre in Kurdistan developed spontaneously, without effective state support but because of individual endeavours by those who were determined to expand it. While Persian cultural hegemony and a more oppressive Pahlavi state of the 1970s hindered the Kurdish theatre, other individuals across Iran contributed to the growth of theatre in Kurdish cities. Taking into account the dearth of adequate research on Kurdish theatre, evidence and oral history allude more to the perception of

¹²² Faruqi, *Saqqez*, 163.

¹²³ Ibid.; secondary schools were encouraged by books on theatre. According to a contemporary observer, a case in point was a play entitled *dozd-e nashiy be Kahdan Mizanad* performed by Saqqez's Sa'di Secondary School students in Persian. Amini, Interview.

¹²⁴ Faruqi, *Saqqez*, 164.

¹²⁵ 'Omar Faruqi, who composed and performed plays in the 1970s, names a number of these artists: Muhammad Muhammadpanah, Fayege Adami, Naser Ardalan, Majed Hamza'iy, Muhammad Zarendy, Muhsen Khursand, Abdulrahman Andishe, Ali Esfand, J'afar Ja'fardust, Ebrahim Vaisiyn, Khalid Khaki and Amjad Alimuradi. Many became well-known artists towards the end of the 1970s. Ibid., 163-65.

theatre as a kind of modern art, which indeed was a modern tool of expression, rather than a site of at least explicit cultural resistance. The plays limited their themes to include social issues and folklore while, as the advertisement in the following figure shows, this scarcity was compensated for by performing plays written by prominent Iranian playwrights—Theatre in Kurdistan became very politicised during the 1979 Revolution.

Modernisation and Secularisation

Interviews confirm a popular perception of the era of the White Revolution as a ‘secularising’ age in which the religious way of life diminished and a new secular generation emerged. This new generation was increasingly characterised by possessing education and adhering to a ‘modern’, progressive worldview. This view of the era of the White Revolution is evidenced by many factors, for example, the emergence of educated women and their increasing presence in the public sphere, and by ongoing cultural transformations reflected by visual means of communication. Economic and political stability of the early 1970s seems to be another crucial factor that suggests the rise of secularity in the era in which a religious image of Iran was effectively being replaced by a ‘secular’ state. Indeed, the Pahlavi state was preoccupied with attempts to redefine Iran’s international place among ‘world civilisations’ through appealing to pre-Islamic Iran in expensive celebrations, e.g. the extravagant 2,500th Celebration of ‘Iranian Monarchy’ in 1971. At the same time, the cultural transformations strengthened that secular image, especially now that it was characterised by famous female singers.

This view, however, results from a misconception of secularism not as the separation of state and religion or as the creation of a society which bestows on its members critical ability and deprive, for example, sanctified canons or institutions of any immunity to criticism. Moreover, there is a correlation between its perceived secularism and a decline in religious practices. According to Nikki Keddie, the modernisation thesis ‘correlates modernization with secularization and generally measures secularization

primarily through declining church membership and declared religious beliefs'.¹²⁶ She argues that the secularisation thesis 'asserts that the social significance of religion diminishes in response to' modernisation. This critical approach to 'secularism' enables us to view social and cultural transformation of both Iranian and Kurdish society neither as the secularisation of society nor as a natural consequence of 'modernisation'. This idea of 'becoming modern' underlines a popular perception of 'modern' as advanced or civilised in contrast to 'traditional', i.e. backward. Therefore, the dichotomy of modern and traditional reproduces the popular misconception of 'secularism'.

Simultaneously, an inevitable comparison between Iran in the 1970s and earlier Iran (or what came to replace the Pahlavi state after 1979) strengthens the popular perception. However, this popular perception loses ground if one focuses on the Pahlavi state and its policies. When considering the Pahlavi state, it is clear that authoritarianism and Westernised modernisation sowed the seeds of, or at least contributed immensely to the rise of, political Islam, that is an Islamic movement which made as its goal the seizure of political power in Iran. The growth of political Islam was not an inevitable outcome of modernisation. Contingencies and external factors, undoubtedly, play their role in history; however, to understand the ascendancy of a social force over others, one should recognise, to borrow from Gramsci, 'the preceding cultural period',¹²⁷ which, especially in this case, resulted in the cultural and political hegemony of the religious opposition.

In fact, during the White Revolution the Islamic movement became increasingly revolutionary and politicised. This process had started since the early 1940s, as shown by the leadership of the militant activists, who deployed 'clandestine political journalism and organisation while using religious sermons as a political platform...[and] the cooperation

¹²⁶ Nikki R. Keddie, "Secularism and State: Towards Clarity and Global Comparison," *New Left Review*, No. 226 (1997).

¹²⁷ David Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 53.

between the militant clerics and petty bourgeois intellectuals'.¹²⁸ Moreover, across Iran Islamic associations grew and the number of trained *mujtahids*, or interpreters of the shari'a, increased,¹²⁹ adding to the already considerable number of religious functionaries, major and minor mosques, seminaries and religious schools, all of which were financially sanctioned by *vaqfs* (the offices of religious endowments), as well as religious taxes.¹³⁰ Moreover, the dissemination of radical ideas took place through a network of mosques and religious associations, by which activists spread political tapes, including the speeches of Ayatulla Khomeini,¹³¹ who embodied this movement, and organised meetings in the *Huseiniyas*, congregation halls for Shi'a commemoration ceremonies.

This image of the growth of religious opposition does not fully apply to Kurdistan, which both adhered to a different branch of Islam and engaged in *Kurdayeti*'s cultural resistance against ethnic and cultural oppression. The dissimilarity results from the following religious and cultural reasons. The westernising modernisation of Iran was threatening the religious, hegemonising/hegemonic side of Persian culture, which was bound to a Shi'a Islam represented by an authoritative, hierarchical religious establishment. At least an effective part of this establishment was politically inspired by the modernisation of Iran as a result of which it experienced a fundamental intellectual break with the past by committing itself to political action to seize power. At the same time, the scale of cultural transformation in central Iran and its major urban centres was more profound than elsewhere, for example, in the Kurdish region. Therefore, *Kurdayeti*'s major cultural and religious components functioned as effective barriers to the possible impact of the politicised religious movement in Iran. As noted above, the new educated generation in Kurdistan, which represented cultural, social and political

¹²⁸ Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, 96-97.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 96.

¹³⁰ Yapp, *The near East*, 337.

¹³¹ Ibid., 343.

activities, inclined towards a socialist or progressive worldview which was preoccupied by social inequalities. In the political sphere, this worldview historically became the foundation on which organisational and practical cooperation between Kurdish activists and others in Iran took place. In contrast, organisational or practical unity based on religion has been almost non-existent in Kurdistan.

However, the above assessment does not imply the complete absence of a religious movement in Kurdistan in the era of the White Revolution. Overlooked by studies or memoirs on the period in question, modernisation stimulated a political and religious trend, which came to be embodied by Ahmad Muftizada (1933-1993) who eventually came to represent a religious *Kurdayeti* in 1979. He was born into a *mufti* family and the title is seemed to be designated by Naser Adin Shah, the Qajar ruler.¹³² The *mufti*'s role offered religious prestige to the *mufti* and his descendants in attracting the support of followers. Ahmad Muftizada's grandfather and father resided in Sanandaj, presiding over the religious duties of the population. By the time he was born, the *mufti* role had to a great extent been institutionalised. In the early 1960s, Ahmad followed his father to Tehran University's School of Theology where the latter taught and, when he fell ill, Ahmad began to teach. Among other Sunni teachers there was Hajj Abdul Rahman Agha Muhtadi, a former Minister of the Kurdistan Republic of 1946 and from a famous landowner family, who exerted a profound impact on the Kurdish identity of the current generation of Kurdish students.¹³³ Ahmad Muftizada became a regular guest in Rahman

¹³² Ali Ezzatyar, *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan: Ethnic and Religious Implications in the Greater Middle East* (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 55-56. The book claims that to address a religious question, the Qajar Shah demanded opinions also 'from a scholar who could provide a Sunni interpretation on the matter', (ibid., 55.) and that against odds a certain Abdulla Dishi, Ahmad Muftizada's grandfather, was found in Qajar Kurdistan. Dishi participated in a meeting with Shi'a scholars in the presence of the Shah and made such an impact by his 'knowledge on diverse Islamic matters' that he was given the 'nickname of Al-Farabi. As a result 'he was named the "Mofti" of Iran's Sunnis by Nasser al-Deen Shah'. Ibid., 56. Although it is unlikely that there had been no other well-informed Sunni scholars at the time, this indicates to the family's religious prestige which lasted, first, institutionally and, later, spiritually.

¹³³ Ibid., 82.; Biglari, Interview.

Muhtadi's residence in Tehran were regular meetings on Kurdish culture and literature were held. He became the theology teacher's son-in-law in the early 1970s after he became an activist for Kurdish political, cultural and religious rights.

Ahmad Muftizada's political activities went back at least to the early 1960s when he was detained with other Kurdish activists for a short period. In these years he distanced himself from the *mufti* institution because it was 'deriving its legitimacy from the King'.¹³⁴ However, there seemed to be intellectual reasons too. He was influenced by Sayyed Qutb, the Egyptian political Islamist, and by the Muslim Brotherhood while he argued for 'scientific' aspects of the Qur'an, and emphasised Wahhabism in Sunnism.¹³⁵ For such reasons, 'he ceased to be a Mulla, replaced his clerical dress for men's suiting and retained a simple life'.¹³⁶ By the middle of the 1970s, according to oral history, Muftizada had distanced himself from other Kurdish activists who inclined explicitly to the Left and became more outspoken against the Pahlavi regime. This is exemplified by his speech in Swara Ilkhanizada's funeral in 1976, related through his wife's family.¹³⁷ This is also illustrated in his contribution to public debates in which on one occasion he censured a prominent Baha'i in Iran—in the eyes of adherents of other religious schools in Iran, the Pahlavi regime favoured the Baha'is in detriment to others.¹³⁸ His prison time in 1964 effectively changed Muftizada politically and the death of his beloved wife of heart failure in 1971 spiritually, making him a modest and scrupulous man.

Furthermore, intellectually and practically, his social location was also important for him as a religious thinker. Sanandaj, the provincial centre, was a city which more than any other Kurdish city was affected by Westernisation through television and radio whose local programmes too, as noted above, gradually became more Westernised. Indeed, a

¹³⁴ Ezzatyar, *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan*, 69.

¹³⁵ Biglari, Interview.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ezzatyar, *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan*, 108.

¹³⁸ Biglari, Interview.

crucial technological development, which made Muftizada a household name in Sanandaj, was the city's part-time television channel in the Kurdish language. In the holy month of Ramadan in 1976 when a programme on religious matters was to be broadcasted in the evening, 'there was no question about who would be the most appropriate individual to present on the show' which continued for the entire month of Ramadan.¹³⁹ To support the argument regarding the impact of modernisation on religious thinking, however limited, but significant, we need to remember that Ayatulla Muhammad Mardukh was another, more prominent, religious authority who maintained the place of religion in public life in many ways, including his prolific writings. Also from Sanandaj, he contributed to religious debate by arguing against Shi'a religious thought. For example, he wrote a pamphlet in the early 1960s in which he asserted that contrary to the belief of the Shi'a, Sayyeds (direct descendants of the prophet of Islam) did not exist.¹⁴⁰

Muftizada, Mardukh and the emergence of the idea of *Maktab-i Qur'an* (Ku. Qur'anic School), which materialised in 1979, highlights the existence of a religious movement, however weak, directly linked to the modernisation of Iran. In fact, as an idea, *Maktab-i Qur'an* was the result of Muftizada's religious thinking which placed the holy book in the centre of the religious interpretation of social life. By the middle of the 1976 he had become a critic of 'the clergy', of superficial ways of interpreting the Qur'an, the Prophet's sayings, and a religion, which had become, in his view, 'empty' for people.¹⁴¹ The Islamism of Ali Shari'ati and the political and religious ideas of Mehdi Bazargan, a prominent liberal and religious figure, contained attractive elements for Muftizada.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Ezzatyar, *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan*, 107. Ezzatyar's main aim is to show that Ahmad Muftizada, who became a prominent *religious* figure in revolutionary Kurdistan in 1979, is a historical example to prove the Kurds' aversion to both political Islam and religious extremism, making the Kurds ideal allies of the West. The book does not concern itself with the intellectual or cultural transformations of the era, in which the rise of Muftizada can be explained.

¹⁴⁰ Amini, Interview.

¹⁴¹ Ezzatyar, *The Last Mufti of Iranian Kurdistan*, 101.

¹⁴² Ibid., 101.

While it is true that religious practices declined as a new educated, urban generation increasingly characterised Kurdish society, the Pahlavi's 'secularism' did not satiate the spiritual needs of people, whose older generation continued to embrace religious practices. On a wider scale, the decrease in the number of religious schools and sects, and the gradual out-fashioning of various religious methods of healing, all went against the place of religion in society. In urban centres, where religious beliefs had shown signs of decline—this was seen in adopting new customs and ways of life—the population was gradually attracted to religious practices which included hajj pilgrimage and conducting rituals and ceremonies. This happened during the same period that technological novelties of television and cinema, and modern education were in full swing.

The popular perception of the era of the White Revolution as secularising does not explain fully the cultural transformation of the era because it is based on a flawed understanding of secularism. The westernising modernisation of Iran also sowed the seed of modern religious *Kurdayeti* embodied by likes of Muftizada, whose political stance responded to ethnic and religious prejudices against the Kurds, while his religious thinking was a critique of, not only the institutional inferiority of the Sunni religion, but also a transforming society.

CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Modern *Kurdayeti*, as resistance to homogenisation, continued to rely on Kurdish cultural forms to preserve the main components of Kurdish identity. Modern Kurdish and Persian cultural encounters were based on a marginalised Kurdish identity and a homogenising Persian identity. As argued above, while the process of socio-economic modernisation of Iran succeeded in incorporating Kurdish society into modern Iran by strengthening existing bonds and creating new ties, political modernisation encountered ethnic resistance on behalf of the Kurds. The Kurdish language and other cultural aspects

preserved Kurdishness. Modern *Kurdayeti* is thus directly related to the political modernisation of Iran based on the centralisation of power and cultural homogenisation. Kurdish cultural and political activities were the results of the modernisation and were enforced and encouraged by ongoing ideological transformations.

Cultural resistance here refers to both intentional or organisational and unintentional use of Kurdish in cultural activities, which defied Persian cultural hegemony. At an organisational level, cultural activities since the early 1960s were organised by Kurdish university students. The Union for Kurdish Students organised meetings, distributed published books, and celebrated specific days such as the formation of Kurdish Republic of 1946.¹⁴³ Linguistic simplification and purification which aimed to promote Kurdish words and compose Kurdish dictionaries was also important, while meetings were organised in Swara Ilkhanizada's residence in Tehran to discuss Kurdish literature and other topics of the day.¹⁴⁴ Such practices continued when the Union terminated in the middle of the decade and during this time more connections with Iranian left-wing activists were established. Subsequently Kurdish university students were influenced by socialist ideas.¹⁴⁵ These organised cultural practices were inevitably linked to political activities.

At a more popular level, teachers and other social and cultural activists played significant roles in the resistance. As members of a new educated, urban generation were affected by a culture of change across Iran, they disseminated Kurdish cultural forms too. They benefited hugely from Kurdish music and poetry, now transmitted by various radio stations.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, an ongoing intellectual transformation closely corresponded to current socio-economic transformation which made new socialist ideas very attractive.

¹⁴³ Biglari, Interview.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Amini, Interview; Biglari, Interview.

It was for this reason that, for example, Aryanpur's sociology class was packed,¹⁴⁷ and Kurdish teachers or cultural activists across the Kurdish region established libraries and bookshops.¹⁴⁸ A significant impact of this process, the ability of people to read and write in Kurdish increased. This was especially the case with those engaged with Kurdish literature because political oppression effectively suppressed the wider population from gaining Kurdish literary skills. The popular awareness of Kurdish culture, literature or history was limited. Indeed, the combination of Pahlavi's increasing dictatorship and Persian cultural hegemony significantly restricted access to knowledge. The process of Persian cultural hegemony crucially popularised the idea of 'Persian culture as a more advanced culture'.¹⁴⁹ Many trends illustrate this. For example, using conventional religious names for children declined while choosing Persian names increased considerably,¹⁵⁰ and growing cities such as Sanandaj, a provincial centre, became more 'Persianised' in lifestyle and language. 'Persianised' also meant more 'Westernised' and it was no surprise that the cleric Ahmad Muftizada emerged to represent an Islamic *Kurdayeti* in Sanandaj in 1979.

Like music, another crucial aspect of Kurdish culture, that had become more important than before, was the celebration of *Nowruz* as a *Kurdish* tradition. In the context of cultural resistance alongside other written and customary ways to promote Kurdish culture, cultural and political activists began to treat the celebration of *Nowruz* and Kawa, the blacksmith, as a *Kurdish* new year and a *Kurdish* champion, respectively; such a tradition was also politicised.¹⁵¹ The roles of individuals were crucial in expanding Kurdish customs and traditions which, when combined, indicated their paradoxical

¹⁴⁷ Biglari, Biglari, Interview.

¹⁴⁸ Kaiwan, Interview; Amini, Interview.

¹⁴⁹ Amini, Interview.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Biglari, Interview.

growth as distinct cultural traits in relation to the increasing socio-economic integration of Kurdish society.

Nevertheless, because the state was not hostile to the practice of Kurdish language, dress and ways of life in public and private spheres (except for the use of the 'official' language and dress code in education and administration), Kurdish cultural forms continued to be represented by dress, Kurdish weddings and dance, and, crucially, music. The continuation of Kurdish cultural ways of life was possible because numerous individuals endeavoured to preserve them through poetry, literature, folklore, historiography and social and political actions. One artistic area, which represented Kurdish culture more freely, was undoubtedly music. 'Local music', as it was referred to in contrast to 'Iranian music', featured in radio programmes, opening a new arena for Kurdish artists, musicians and singers to mature and commit themselves to Kurdish cultural practices. Like many other cultural areas, the interrelation of Kurdish and Persian music and the state's 'secular' attitude to music allowed Kurdish music to prosper. However, as oral history accounts confirm, the contribution of individuals were crucial to promoting Kurdish music. Radio and other technical means of communication made many signers household names within a short span of time. However, Kurdish music remained strictly 'local' because it never achieved the status of Persian music which had Iran's television and radio stations at its disposal. The lack of state support and inadequate institutional resources hindered the artistic transformation of Kurdish music, while Persian music's enjoyment of infinite resources and new technology contributed to Persian cultural hegemony. Nevertheless, Kurdish music remained a formidable site of cultural resistance.

Kurdish cultural resistance characterised various aspects of modern cultural encounters. It was represented in various organisational and popular levels. Some aspects of Kurdish culture such as music, boosted by the introduction of radio, continued to be

practiced widely, while other forms of cultural resistance included the establishment of libraries and bookshops, the distribution of books, poetry and musical cassettes. This occurred despite the fact that Kurdish literature was heavily suppressed by the state's oppressive apparatus, and the combination of linguistic policies and Persian linguistic hegemony prevented the popularisation of Kurdish literacy skills. Due to resistance and formidable distinctive elements of Kurdish identity, the modernisation failed in homogenisation of Iranian identities, i.e. identities living within Iran. On the contrary, the modernisation strengthened *Kurdayeti* which endeavoured to emerge in new political and cultural forms.

CONCLUSION

Politically, the era of the White Revolution eventually came to be characterised by the concentration of political power and the state's oppressive measures against its opponents. As regards Kurdish opposition, it revived throughout the decades following the demise of the Kurdish Republic of 1946 while simultaneously encountering major intellectual transformations in the 1960s and 1970s, shaping new theories and political actions. Oral history, along with a closer analysis of the events, defies the myth of *the Rebellion of 1968-9* as a period of armed struggle, instead presents it as a juncture when at least a decade-long activism was effectively suppressed by the Iranian army, partly in collaboration with the Barzani movement. The next decade marked the emergence of an educated generation of Kurdish political activists whose ideas and actions reflected a transforming age, subsequently forming the nuclei of modern political parties; a distinctive characteristic of this generation was its critique of guerrilla warfare. The reinvigoration of Kurdish opposition along with the emergence of new movements were directly linked to the socio-economic modernisation of an exclusive state, a process which, while accelerated the incorporation of the Kurds into modern Iran, encountered resistance against homogenisation.

The main cultural consequence of modernisation was the cultural hegemony of Persian. Until relatively recently, Iranian cultures had lived side by side and did not perceive each other as *alien*; they were communities with shared history and culture. Prior to modern cultural encounters, political and cultural domination by the ruling state was maintained mainly through coercive measures, while Persian culture and language relied on its literary prestige and administrative continuity and not on systematic marginalisation of others—Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* shaped the historical consciousness of the Kurds while Sufism relied on Persian for its literary form of poetry. Although political centralisation and institutional modernisation, most importantly modern education, inaugurated a systematic promotion of Persian culture and language into 'mainstream' or 'Iranian' since the early decades of the twentieth century, Persian cultural hegemony was effectively achieved during the era of the White Revolution because it irretrievably transformed cultural dimensions through its proliferation of the audio and visual means of communication. Of course, by then literacy had also increased considerably, resulting in more effective impacts of written modes of communication in this respect. However, the audio-visual means of communication revolutionised the nature of cultural encounters. Until its emergence, based on a national understanding of the past, modern education had continued to cultivate the idea of the cultural superiority of the Persian language over other languages which were defined as its less significant branches. However, the new means of communication and their profound psychological impacts made Persian's 'normality' and 'superiority' common sense, thus giving Persian culture a hegemonic status. Simultaneously, the White Revolution institutionalised the concept of other cultures and languages, including Kurdish, as 'local'. This is best recognised in the state's prioritisation of Persian as the official and state-preferred medium of communication regarding technological innovations, and exemplified by the literary advances in Persian literature, supported by institutionalised education and innumerable

publication houses. However, Kurdish cultural and literary resistance continued with the effect that the Kurdish society of the end of the 1970s was culturally a synthesis of the dialectics of cultural homogenisation and Kurdish cultural resistance.

27. Radio broadcasting, Cinema, Theatre, Library, Newspapers and Magazines, 1972-73.

Source: Plan and Budget Organisation, Statistical Yearbook of Iran 1352 [March 1973 - March 1974] (Iran: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1975), pp. 141-145.

Programmes Broadcasted by Voice of Iran, 1972 (hours)

Location	Total	Iranian Music	Local Music	Foreign Music	Literacy, Science	Religious Programmes	Plays	Varieties	News
<i>Voice of Iran</i>	8,760	2,916	234	1,395	699	286	286	1,150	1,796
<i>Sanandaj</i>	5,715	655	810	186	1,234	582	203	875	1,170
<i>Kermanshah</i>	7,116	690	386	267	3,437	562	357	650	767
<i>Marivan</i>	525	150	150	0	60	45	60	20	40
<i>Mahabad</i>	6,176	980	815	150	1,600	310	335	47	1,939

Cinema by Administrative Divisions

	1972	1973
Total	418	424
Markazi		
Tehran	121	122
Other Cities	18	17
Kurdistan Province	6	6

Theatre and Attendance

City	1972			1973		
	Theatres	Seats	Attendance	Theatres	Seats	Attendance
Total	13	4,856	374,000	14	5,450	325,420
Tehran	7	2,435	29,000	8	3,030	31,420
Sanandaj	1	350	35,000	1	350	15,000

Public Libraries

	Libraries	Books
Total	308	1,035,658
Tehran	13	171,000
Central Province excl. Tehran	17	63,000
Kurdistan	8	22,262

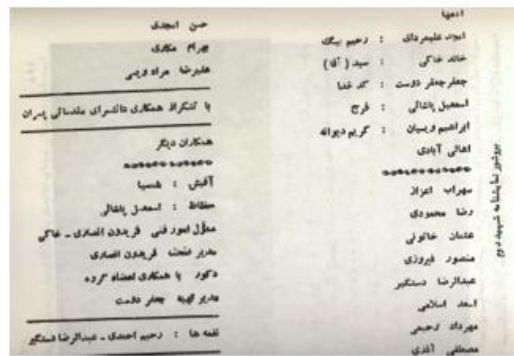
Newspapers, Weekly and Monthly Magazines, 1973

Administrative Divisions	Total	News-paper	Weekly Magazines	Montly Magazines
	195			
	(1964=207)	39	31	57
Central	134	26	29	55
	1			
Kurdistan	(1945=3)	0	0	0

28. Theatre in Kurdistan.



امیر بهاری دومه‌پاد (ساوجیلاغ) مرکز کردستان مکرری در زمان حکومت سیف‌الدین‌خان سردار
Mission Scientifique en Perse
Etudes Géographiques par J.de MORGAN tome 2 paris 1895, P 40



From top: *Miri Nowroz* celebration in Mahabad, reported by a French newspaper in 1895. Source: ‘Ubaidulla Ayyubiyan, “Mire Nowruzi,” 105; theatre in Kurdistan in the middle of the 1970s. Scenes from *Shahid-e Zende* [The Living Martyr], 1977; and an advertisement dated Day 2536 [January 1977]. In the middle picture, from right, perform Amjad Alimuradi, Ja’far Ja’fardust and Ebrahim Weisiyan. The last two individuals were active in Mahabad and Sanandaj, respectively. Source: Faruqi, *Saqqez*, 166-169.

Chapter 6: The Modernisation of Gender Relations

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to discuss the transformation of the social status of women in Kurdish society during the era of the White Revolution, which was characterised by important developments in both private and public spheres across Iran. For example, as the people's awareness of hygiene began to increase and medical care became available, the burden of childbearing lessened, and later, with the decrease in the size of families, women's presence in the public sphere increased, which, in turn, led to their growing independence. Legal, educational, medical and economic changes which affected the social status of women, were taking place in the background. In a process which combined such factors to transform the place of women, women's agency was integral. Inextricably related to the process of social change across Iran, this transformation was no less significant in Kurdish society. The new image of women in Kurdish-Iranian society of the end of the 1970s was a product of the social change and transformation Iran had experienced especially in the decades following the Second World War. Although the gradual 'emancipation' and changes in the position of women in society has been a hallmark of modern Iran, more interpretations of this process and analyses of the concepts involved are required to explain various aspects of that process. However, an attempt to review the literature on women in the modernising Kurdistan of the second half of the twentieth century quickly reveals the scarcity, almost the absence, of gender studies

approaches to the historical period. Some exceptions are found in the recent, though inadequate, inclusion of women in Kurdish historiography.

This chapter starts with a brief discussion of the redefinition of the role of women by intellectuals, including the Kurdish literati, in Asian society, upon contact with modern ideas. The result was an intellectual foundation to deal with the question of woman in the process of modern nation-building. This is followed by an overview of the social and linguistic foundations of the gender order in order to cast light on social conditions and identify change. Next, this chapter underlines the scientific, educational, legal and economic changes of the era which transformed social status of women in Kurdish society as well as across Iran. The last sections of this chapter include assessments of the two important phenomena of collective agency and resistance, which impacted the course of social change.

For source materials, this chapter relies on oral history, memoirs and official statistics. However valuable, these sources also expose the scarcity of the studies of social change and gender on the period; these studies have only begun to appear since the early 2000s, authored by university students and scholars of Kurdish studies in Iran.¹ To a great extent, however, this deficiency is compensated by the more established field of Iranian gender studies on the Pahlavi era, because the changes in Iran affected all women, regardless of cultural differences.² This is a crucial point to bear in mind, because it is precisely for such a reason that any categorisation of women based on ethnicity will blur the study of the process of change and transformation insofar as gender is concerned. Of

¹ Cf. Rezayi et al., "Sonnat, Nosazi Wa Khanewade"; Mohammadpur and Iman, "Taahirate Ejtemai Dar Sardasht".

² Cf. Guity Nashat (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Iran* (Colorado: West View Press, 1983); Afkhami, *Zanan, Dowlat Va Jame'e Dar Iran: 1941-1978*; Women's Organization of Iran, *Hoquqe Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)* [Women and Law in Iran (1967-1978)] (n. p.: Foundation for Iranian Studies, 1994).

course, in multi-ethnic Iran this does not obviate the need for consideration of distinct cultural or political behaviours, which should be explained by referring to contexts which highlight them.

MODERNITY AND THE IDEAS OF THE 'NEW WOMAN' AND THE 'NEW MAN'

This section briefly underlines the intellectual origins of modern ideas regarding women in modern nation-states, in order to help the understanding of discursive and social changes to the social status of women. Based on the literature and intellectual movements of the turn of the twentieth century, the modern idea of 'nation', based on the new concept of *vatan* (motherland), was accompanied by the concepts of progress and modern education; the latter had come to be perceived, as Namek Kemal emphasised, as 'true vehicle of progress' and an essential ingredient behind any nation's scientific and historical advance.³ Cultivating such ideas especially since the early twentieth century, intellectuals in Asian societies also began a radical redefinition of the social place and role of women in society. Previous social movements throughout the nineteenth century such as Babism and Bahaism in Iran had addressed the oppression of women, and encouraged their education; this was explicitly stated in the latter movement's *Book of Bayan*. Based on the writings of the female historian and poet of the nineteenth century, Mastoura Ardalan (1804-1844), Kurdish poetry as the main literary form also included critiques of the social status of women. She expresses discontent with a situation in which 'a [woman's] head, worthy of an officer's, is veiled'.⁴ However, the new era of nations and nationalism demanded more radical changes in perceptions and practice. In addition

³ Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 37.

⁴ Quoted in Mastura Kurdistani, *Tarikhe Ardalan* [The History of the Ardalan] (Kermanshahan: Bahrami, 1946), ت [T].

to the femininity given to *vatan* or *patrie* as Motherland, this was because the perceived progress of the ‘nation’ stipulated well-educated generations (of men). Therefore, ‘new woman’ was considered as both educated and the educator of the (masculine) nation; this notion began to be supported by both secular and religious nationalism, the latter represented by Islamic reformism.⁵ This concept of new women became evident in the Middle East as Qasim Amin, an Egyptian lawyer, entitled his 1899 book *The Liberation of Women*.

These ideas were embraced by Kurdish intellectuals with the effect that the traces of modernity, which entailed a modern view of women, can be detected since the early twentieth century in Kurdish literature, mainly represented by poetry. For example, after returning from Istanbul to Ottoman Kurdistan in the early twentieth century to convey the message of modernity, Piramerd (1867-1950) was one of the early advocates of the idea of the new woman among Kurdish modernists, linking *taraqi vatan* (the progress of the Motherland) along with *awladi chak* (good generation) to educated women.⁶ He insisted

Only the educated girls
Make the nation succeed
Raise [the kind of] children [needed]
For the nation to proceed.⁷

Therefore, the need to educate women was justified by emphasising their roles as educated mothers in the progress of the new nation because, as Piramerd argued, progress

⁵ Cf. Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Women [and] the New Woman* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000).

⁶ Omed Ashna (ed.), *Piramerd*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Hawler: Aras, 2009), 27.

⁷ Piramerd, *Diwani Piramerdi Namir* [the Eternal Piramerd's Collection of poetry], ed. Mohammad Rasul Hawar (Hawler: Shivan, 2007), 30-31.

stipulated a ‘good [i.e. well-educated and holding modern ideas] generation’. Later literary figures such as Fayaq Bekas (1905-1948), Qane‘, Goran (1904-1962) and Hemin continued the promulgation of ‘new woman’ throughout the twentieth century amid social and political transformations,⁸ though there were others such as Aladdin Sajjadi (1907-1984), whose national refashioning of the Kurds and their history rejected ‘new woman’ because, according to him, women remained men’s intellectual inferiors despite education.⁹

Kurdish Poetry also revealed the influence of other radical ideas. For example, seemingly influenced by the Iraqi poet Jamil Sidqqi al-Zahawi (1863-1936), Fayaq Bekas’s poems explicitly demanded unveiling as an essential step towards the emancipation of women; this aspect later influenced Hemin’s poetry too. Such ideas were received and popularised in intimate connection with the modernisation of ‘the nation’ in general, and the institution of education in particular. Observing women’s social inferiority, the idea of the new woman inspired educated and powerful women who exerted a profound impact on social change. Meanwhile, this modern redefinition of woman intimately involved a redefinition of men, aspiring to become a ‘modern man’ who had to play an active role in the making of the new woman; this indicated the modernisation of both femininity and masculinity, new ways by which gender roles were socially and culturally reconstructed in a changing world, in connection with each other. The abovementioned literary figures were mostly men, committed to that very goal. Alongside nation-building, the twentieth century can also be considered a century of making new women, while modernisation transformed the social organisation of sexual

⁸ See Qane’s and Goran’s *diwans* or collections of poetry.

⁹ Aladdin Sajjadi, *Mezhui Adabi Kurdi* [The History of Kurdish Literature] (Kurdish) (Sanandaj: Kurdistan, 1391 [2012-13]), 139.

difference. From this perspective, we can observe that modern Iran had produced a modern image of women by the end of the 1970s fundamentally different from the earlier generations. This process involved challenging enormous social and discursive obstacles that worked to maintain the social inferiority of women. Nevertheless, any comparative study of the early decades with later decades of the twentieth century will quickly reveal the remarkable scope of change.

Women of various communities had always played active roles throughout history in the family and the workplace. These two spheres of life became more distinct with the expansion of a capitalist economy. Women in Kurdish communities of village, towns, and tribes contributed to economic production, and maintained the family, by undertaking more tasks and bearing more responsibilities than men. Prior to significant changes in the role of women in the family, women were mostly prepared for marriage; married women had to devote most of their time to childbearing or caring for children, with the effect that before they reached thirty-five many had already given birth to a high number of children. As a result, their chances of a better life were restricted. A number of interrelated factors (as discussed below) transformed the place of women in society in general, although for many, especially those in rural areas or the urban poor, conditions had not profoundly changed even by the end of the 1970s.

Despite the contribution of intellectuals in Iran, Kurdistan and the region, in mid-twentieth century Iran to be a woman still meant to be an asset in man's possession,¹⁰ with limited access to social resources. The hegemony of man and the subordination of woman were (re)produced by a constitutive discourse which banked on cultural symbols and social norms and was supported by the existing institutions such as religion. The

¹⁰ Qubadi, Interview.

interaction of these elements contributed to the definition of the woman who was represented by man, who 'sets the standards of propriety for women's behaviour, their role in society, and the kind of punishment meted out to women who did not abide by the social norms set for them'.¹¹ The woman's life, behaviour and dress code were shaped under both the visible and the invisible gazes of the patriarchal man. The continuation of the authority of the man through such norms and codes maintained a patriarchal system which was reinforced by a patriarchal language, biased religious practices and the politics of the ruling classes.¹² A good Kurdish woman was idealised as *pak* (Ku. pure) or *ma'sum* (Ku. pitiful and innocent), while one seen as immoral was addressed as *behaya* or *besharm* (shameless) to suggest that she lacked modesty and honour respectively. In this definition, the woman was but a sex object, a childbearing person and a housekeeper. In a mostly rural society, the culture of the Kurdish *agha* (landowner) shaped important aspects of the existing gender relations. It was these relations which began to transform with the expansion of a capitalist market economy, urbanisation, and modern education. However, the conditions of the past, i.e. religious norms, customs and cultural symbols, were also fundamental ingredients for (re)shaping gender relations. The transformation of the mode of production did not automatically transform social or cultural norms: as discussed further below, agency was crucial for social change.

The linguistic reproduction of powerful masculinity and subordinated femininity was another crucial aspect of gender relations in Kurdish societies. As Amir Hassanpour has shown, deviance from mainstream social norms was associated with negative, but firmly institutionalised, traits such as *hiz* (literally, always ready for sexual intercourse)

¹¹ Nashat, *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 5.

¹² For the role of Kurdish language see Amir Hassanpour, "The (Re)Production of Patriarchy in the Kurdish Language," in Shahrzad Mojab (ed.), *Women of Non-State Nation: The Kurds* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001).

and *makkar* (cunning), which were framed as feminine qualities. On the other hand bravery, stamina and wisdom were qualities associated with men, who were naturally capable of ruling, judging and leading. Women of different social classes might have been distinguished materially or to some extent culturally, based on their degree of access to cultural capital. However, the definition of woman as the property of man, based on the norms of masculinity and femininity, applied more or less to any woman.

According to Hassanpour, who has conducted extensive and excellent research on the subject, ‘the unequal distribution of gender power is clearly recorded in the Kurdish language, which is one of the ignored yet powerful sites in the exercise of patriarchal rule’ in Kurdish society.¹³ For example, *zhin* (Ku. woman) and *piyaw* (Ku. man) represent diametrically opposed qualities. Man connotes ‘human being’, while *piyaw kushtin* or *piyaw khirap* are used to refer to ‘to kill [a man]’ and ‘[becoming] a bad man’, respectively. Words for positive qualities are formed with a masculine suffix, for example (manliness, manhood), *aza-yi* (bravery) and *netirs-i* (fearlessness). By contrast, the words most associated with woman are traditionally feminine qualities such as *namus* (honour), *abrru* (honour), *sharaf* (honour), *sharm* (shame, shyness) and *haya* (modesty, sense of shame). *Piyaw-ati*, manliness, is a positive virtue, while *wek-jin* or *zhinana*, derived from the word for woman, connote being a coward and cowardly acts respectively.

Moreover, language is not merely employed to maintain gender inequality and reinforce prejudice against women. At times, similar clichés are used to refer to women and minorities as a means of degradation. For instance, in Kurdish oral culture ‘women and the Jews share the stereotype as timid [while] men signify bravery’.¹⁴ To add to Hassanpour’s study, such designations are closely linked to social practices and to

¹³ Ibid., 227.

¹⁴ Hassanpour, "Farhangi Zaraki Le Khuli Teknoloziy Zamanda".

femininity, with the effect that the practices of marriage and divorce, genital mutilation and social exclusions, what are held to be ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’, etc., are shaped and supported by such discursive designations. Moreover, lexical, semantic and ideological constructions of patriarchy, extend into every layer of Kurdish oral and written culture. This is clearly seen in the many Kurdish dictionaries which later emerged. For example, Hazhar’s *Hambana Borina* reflects misogyny and functions to reproduce the existing power relations in Kurdistan.¹⁵ Nevertheless, resistance to the linguistic foundations of gender order in Kurdish societies constituted a crucial aspect of life, recorded in Kurdish language; examples of folklore and song which promoted the place of woman, also reflected linguistic resistance.

Societal change and resistance to patriarchy, and obstacles to them, formed other aspects of women’s lives. Into the 1970s, women still remained deprived of medical assistance and knowledge which were also scarcely available for the wider urban and rural populations. Pregnancy marked the most difficult time in women’s lives, with childbirth proving the major challenge. As a teacher recalls,

Farasat, a woman from Digin village, continued to work on the carpet-weaving machine in spite of being pregnant. She spent long hours behind the machine while seated, which threatened her health seriously. I warned her about the consequences, but she wanted to finish the carpet as quickly as possible because she would not be able to work for a while after giving birth to her child. I could not do more [because there were no medical centre or doctors

¹⁵ Hazhar’s misogynist stance towards women can be seen in his celebrated book, *Cheshti Mijawir*. The fact that he was a prominent poet with an interesting, somewhat nebulous, background, gave him a linguistic authority, hence his dictionary instantly became very popular.

nearby]. The night she gave birth to her child, there was only the midwife with her unhygienic equipment.¹⁶

Women in Iranian societies constantly encountered cultural and religious barriers set by the patriarchal system, determining what was ‘allowed’ or ‘disallowed’ for them. Women in conservative households were not supposed to share their problems with doctors, and were frequently reminded of the unsuitability of women’s education. Moreover, they were made to believe that ‘women’s diseases’ were a natural part of life, which either went away or stayed, depending on the will of the Supreme Being.¹⁷ Violence against women was widespread, and it was considered the duty of the man to ensure ‘his’ woman’s subordination. Women exercised no rights in marriage’ and had to succumb to norms and customs such as *zhin ba zhin* (exchange marriage) and early marriage engagement, even from birth. Writing about his childhood, the translator Muhammad Qazi (1913-1998) recalls how violence extended to the disruption of the life of women who, becoming widows following the death of their husbands, had to succumb to decisions made by others in order to survive; in many cases they were also separated from their children.¹⁸ Woman’s subordinated status was protected by the absence of rights to divorce husbands and choose partners.

These all took place in a culture in which masculine norms shaped a ‘common sense’ which ruled social and cultural behaviours. Underneath were hidden forms of violence. One area was female genital mutilation (FGM), carried out in extremely unhygienic circumstances, inflicting enduring physical and psychological damage to

¹⁶ Gulrukh Qubadi, *Shaqayeqha Bar Sanglakh: Zendegi Wa Zamaneye Yek Zane Kord Az Kordestane Iran* [Poppies on Rocks: The Life and Time of a Kurdish Woman from Iran] (2015), 84.

¹⁷ Mustafasultani, Interview.

¹⁸ Muhammad Qazi, *Khaterate Yek Motarjem* [A Translator's Memoir] (Tehran: Zenderud, 1992), 19.

young girls, some still in infancy. Another ugly side to this practice was its secrecy. The same teacher quoted above remembers that, in spite of her close contact with the women of the village where she was teaching, she only found out about the practice of FGM by accident because women were forbidden to talk about their experiences in public.¹⁹ It is impossible to provide precise data, but based on various reports, one can reasonably speculate that the practice was carried out as a social norm in some areas or communities.²⁰ In this way, control over both the woman's body and her sexuality was ensured, while the imposed silence confirmed the normality of the practice.

As noted in the previous chapters, in addition to household tasks and helping husbands or fathers on the land, women were exploited in carpet workshops across the Kurdish region. This economic role was not concealed. However, woman's productive role on the land and in the family was not acknowledged as such, while working as skilled or semi-skilled labourers was linked to the economic needs of the family. As modernisation intensified, women began to achieve a better social status in many respects in the urban centres, while the growing demand for carpets increased the exploitation of women in such workshops mostly in the rural areas. Moreover, low wages and long hours characterised the working conditions in the workshops. For example, in Sanandaj and its vicinity, carpet workshops were set up for low-income or migrant women, while machines were installed inside family houses to exploit women and benefit from their work.²¹ According to Gulrukh Qubadi, a teacher and women's activist in the 1970s,

¹⁹ Qubadi, *Shaqayeqha*.

²⁰ For a recent published work on the subject, cf. Fatema Karimi, *Tragediye Tan: Khosunat 'Aleyhe Zanan* [The Tragedy of the Body: Violence Against Women] (Tehran: Roushangaran, 1389 [2010]). The author explains in a video clip that she found out through her research, conducted in the Pava region, how FGM was considered by affected women as both normal and a religious duty, while the idea involved widespread stress and fear endured by girls who expected the same fate. See <https://vimeo.com/51060946>, accessed 13 December 2017.

²¹ Qubadi, Interview.

Farah [Pahlavi] Agribusiness (*sherkat-e sahami-zara'i-e Farah*) for the cultivation of opium and poppy seeds (*Kheshkhash*) also set up a carpet workshop in the Marenj Muzhezh region around Sanandaj. It only employed young girls to work under male or female managers who were trained in the art of carpet-weaving. They had long working hours, which lasted from 6 am to 6 pm. Breaks were every four or five hours during which the girls were taken out to do body exercise. Wages were paid to the girls' fathers. When these young girls grew up, they continued to work as 'self-employed' on a machine purchased by their parents. Families benefited from their children who were either working in carpet-weaving workshops or on a machine set up in the household, whereas young girls endured hardship and received their wages in a dress or custom jewellery only once a year. There were other carpet workshops in other cities such as Kermanshah, Mariwan, Saqqez, Bukan and Minanduab [indicating the growth of the carpet industry]. Physical or other kinds of punishment undoubtedly existed, however we do not know if there was sexual harassment.²²

Migration and the expansion of the economy, as discussed in the previous chapters, increased women's share in the workforce. More Kurdish women became brick-oven factory workers, cleaners, housekeepers and vendors. All these jobs involved harsh conditions. Female vendors included elderly women who had to sell their products, usually hot food, sometimes in extreme climates in open spaces of city bazaars. The need for more income was a decisive factor for the increase in the number of working women in urban centres, while considerably more rural women brought their products to sell in city markets. The women of the migrated families became residents of impoverished districts in the cities, and began to work as cleaners or baby-sitters to increase family income. This change had of course cultural implications for these women, who began to

²² Ibid.

become accustomed to an urban way of life. Moreover, seasonal workers who were exclusively male, left behind wives and children in uncertain circumstances and relying for protection on others.

At the same time, modernisation was characterised by the growing employment opportunities for women who graduated from schools. Since the early 1960s the number of women in teaching and nursing increased because of the spread of modern education. In a change from the early decades of the century, these women no longer exclusively came from aristocratic families, because more primary and secondary schools for girls, as well as teaching and nursing training colleges, had popularised literacy and created employment opportunities for women in certain jobs (see Figure 17). A crucial aspect of this process was the increase in gender awareness of society, reflected in a generation of men in urban centres who were more open to the new ideas which aimed to enhance the social status of women. Furthermore, there were social customs and ways of life which prevented the seclusion of women and provided more space for their interaction with men, particularly in Kurdish communities. This was exemplified by the peculiarity of Kurdish wedding with mixed group dances and women's intermingling with men, and the absence of strict religious ceremonies which characterised the Shi'a religion (e.g. the commemoration of Imam Hussein in Muharram), which effectively decreased the segregation of men and women. Indeed, among the Kurds the celebration of the end of Ramadan or Feast of the Sacrifice, when religious duties were carried out, amounted to a public holiday.

Woman's subservience to man continued to be ensured and reinforced by religion in myriad ways. 'Appropriate' behaviour and dress code were required when a woman encountered religious authorities or entered sacred places. A woman's access to powerful

positions was effectively restricted by assigning her to seemingly sacred roles whose fulfilments ensured her purity and God's satisfaction. The mosque too remained a masculine space; however, there were other spaces such as *Takya*, where they could perform religious ceremonies. Although such religious institutions for women increased in urban centres in the 1960s and 1970s, participation mainly came from an older generation of women, in search of spiritual help.

THE IMPACT OF THE WHITE REVOLUTION ON THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

The era of the White Revolution was characterised by important interrelated factors which profoundly affected the social status of women in Kurdish society. The following section concentrates on the scientific, educational, legal, and economic changes, as well as women's collective agency. The approach in identifying and explaining these factors is informed by a non-developmental view and the perception of the White Revolution as primarily a phenomenon that modernised the existing gender relations.

The new science and modern education

The topic of new science was discussed in relation to the expansion of modern healthcare in Chapter 4. However, a brief discussion of the topic is also required here. The introduction of women to new medical science in Kurdistan entailed their gradual emancipation from the previous conditions of childbirth and lack of hygiene, thus creating more opportunities in life. According to oral accounts, the introduction of contraceptives and their free distributions especially since the 1960s was *the* significant step in that direction.²³ This was not an isolated incident, but was accompanied by the expansion of medical means and knowledge, hygienisation and the increase in the number of women working as medical staff, who 'enthusiastically worked to ameliorate the existing conditions'.²⁴

However, the urban and rural centres' share in the new scientific technologies and medicine was not equal. While cities continued to benefit from new healthcare, rural areas developed at a slow pace in that direction because of poor infrastructural and geographical conditions, as well as the absence of the state, as discussed in previous chapters. This

²³ 'Azizpur, Interview.

²⁴ Ibid.

asymmetrical relationship with technology had enduring effects and outlasted the era of the White Revolution. For example, a doctor recalled how he carried out an operation in Sardasht in 1979 to extract a stillborn child that had remained in the mother's abdomen for three days. This had caused the mother unbearable pains, without having access to any medical advice to identify what caused the pain.²⁵ Despite improvements in social or medical conditions, the urban-rural disparity remained a formidable obstacle to the improvement of conditions for many women.

Modern education in Iran was undoubtedly another significant institution the impact of which on women and society cannot be overestimated. The idea of modern education for girls in Iran had become more acceptable by 1918, when the first public school for girls was opened following a limited number of private or missionary schools, which had started operating since 1907. The first such schools in Sanandaj in Iranian Kurdistan were opened in the early years of the 1920s. Although more primary and secondary schools for girls were established in the bigger cities of Kurdistan by the end of the 1930s, schools for girls only proliferated in the second half of the century (see Chapter 4). Until there were more female teacher training institutions, the shortage of teachers was a significant factor which, combined with other educational deficiencies, hindered women's education.²⁶

For women, modern education continued to distinguish the present from the past. Among the upper classes, as noted above, literacy and greater social and political roles for women were not alien concepts. Modern education, too, became more accessible to the women of the better-off families first. For example, in Sanandaj during the early decades of the modern state women from aristocratic families, such as Mo'tamed Vaziri,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Qubadi, *Shaqayeqha*.

went to primary schools for girls between seven and twelve years' old. Based on the old six-class system, and due to the lack of secondary school, students could become teachers after accomplishing the six-year education. Some women founded other schools for girls in Sanandaj upon their graduation elsewhere and their return to the city.²⁷ By the end of the 1930s, across Kurdish cities the number of girls and young women from prominent families in education increased, as did the number of schools. This process gradually impacted social attitudes to women in education, and with the impact of political events, more women from the wider population were encouraged to seek education. For example, a women's society, *Yakiati Afratani Kurdistan* (Kurdistan's Women Union), was founded in Mahabad under the Kurdish Republic in 1946, possible because of a new intellectual atmosphere in the region since the early 1940s in which the Organisation of Kurdish Revival stood out for its progressive publications and activities. The society's aim was to educate women, while a modern image of woman was even advocated by prominent Kurdish men such as Qazi Muhammad, the head of the Republic.²⁸ Nevertheless, dominant patriarchal views continued to exclude women, including the members of the society, from political participation in the Republic. For example, as Mina Qazi, Qazi Muhammad's wife and a founder of the society recalled later, 'when the Republic was announced in [Mahabad's] city square, we watched from afar in our home'.²⁹ No specific role was assigned to women in the Republic, other than a limited friendly attitude towards literacy for women. Nevertheless, the new idea of women's emancipation was incorporated in the political and social agendas of Kurdish activists, and the interruption of the experience of Mahabad, a phenomenon of the early 1940s, was a serious setback

²⁷ Qubadi, Interview. A teacher in the 1970s, Qubadi can recollect stories told by her mother about women education in the early decades of the twentieth century.

²⁸ Oremar, *Interview with Mina Qazi*, 16-18.

²⁹ Ibid.

for attempts to enhance the social status of women in society. The political situation of the early 1940s in general and the Republic in particular facilitated intellectual transformations, exemplified by *Nishtiman*, and enabled the formation of such societies. According to Mina Qazi, the society aimed to eradicate illiteracy and create opportunities for Kurdish women to prosper and ‘serve their society’.³⁰

The efforts of women of urban upper classes became the guidelines for modern education, encouraging the establishment of more schools for girls in Kurdish urban centres. Modern education for girls developed greatly, until it achieved the emergence of a generation of educated women who, as the result of the expansion of primary and secondary schools for women in Kurdistan, became representative of the women of the 1970s. Although the expansion of schools on this scale was only possible because of the intensified modernisation, this does not undermine the tireless determination of the previous generation of women who helped popularise modern education for women. The introduction of the Literacy Corps in rural areas, according to a teacher from the time, was a turning point which presented women with an opportunity to teach. Simultaneously some men, influenced by the intellectual transformation of the time, became more aware of gender issues.³¹ The intellectual atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s was crucial in encouraging political and cultural activists to advocate teaching in the most deprived regions. In these circumstances, and encouraged by other activists, more educated Kurdish women chose teaching to expand literacy, which involved engaging with women in need.³² The Literacy Corps was a crucial means to that end.³³ Although the presence of any member of the Literacy and Medical Corps in deprived regions was a new

³⁰ Ibid., 17-18.

³¹ Kaiwan, Interview.

³² Qubadi, Interview.

³³ Ibid.

development *per se*, for those who had incorporated the era's ideological transformations and were receptive to progressive and left-wing ideas, this meant more active involvement in social change. For example, as Qubadi recalls,

We [teachers] worked longer hours in the village school, organised after-school clubs, eschewed corporal punishment, and paid attention to the pupils' family circumstances. We were friendly, mixed with women and their families, and listened to their problems. Teachers taught large classes. For example, when I was a teacher in Zarrin Chia village around Kermanshah [in the middle of the 1970s], I had 30 to 40 (Year 1 to Year 5) pupils. All stayed in the same class. Ten were girls. People began to send their girls to school more than before. We established strong relationships with people to be able to convey progressive and emancipatory ideas [to them]. We organised meetings with women to discuss domestic violence, which was common, and find solutions when they sought advice on marriage and family problems. Despite unfavourable conditions, teaching was a thrilling experience which hugely impacted on a community's life.³⁴

The availability of female teachers also created a help point for women to seek advice, in most cases for the first time, on social or cultural issues. In the absence of relevant state institutions in the rural areas, the presence of female teachers and their community work had become very significant. Whilst they had the authority of the state behind them, their constructive approach to work stemmed from their intellectual dispositions, and their willingness to go to rural areas in need and spontaneously engage in extra social work merits recognition.

³⁴ Ibid.

Legal and economic changes

The modern state was in favour of a new image for women, allowing legal changes in favour of women. In addition to new civil laws, the most significant event was the forced unveiling of 1936, which intended to ‘emancipate’ women but had the impact on shutting women back in the sphere of home. Although young school girls had started to go to school in school uniforms even before this law, once the law passed their mothers in many cases preferred to stay home for fear of forced unveiling and abuse from the police.³⁵ The banning of the veil entailed (passive) resistance from women by staying home. Nevertheless, it gradually institutionalised a new women’s dress code in schools and a less veiled type of dress in public. Its later implication was that legal and state support for women could be effective, eventually institutionalising a new dress code for women.³⁶ Kurdish women, specifically those living in the village, were not accustomed to strict veiling. However, they had been veiled enough according to Islamic dress code. The *chasheh/chador* (Ku./Pe. open cloak) was customary, as was other forms of headgear for women. Initially, the proposed dress code (1936) seemed too foreign to the culture, and impractical (see Figure 33), to be implemented by force.

The new family laws were other crucial actions for which the pressure of women had been indispensable. However, without the power of the state, such laws could not have been materialised. Combined with other educational or medical developments, these laws increased the age of marriage for both sexes and bestowed upon women more rights in marriage, family and child custody.³⁷ Because of religious opposition and the Shah’s

³⁵ Qubadi, *Shaqayeqha*, 21-22.

³⁶ Camron Michael Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Women* (Gainesville: California University Press, 2002).

³⁷ See these laws in *Hoquq Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)*, 351-62.

conservatism, these laws had their own limits. Nevertheless, they represented major advances in the legal status of women.

While the increase in the number of women in new jobs also owed itself to the expansion of modern education, employment provided economic independence and empowered women in both the home and in public. The socio-economic transformation created or increased new opportunities in teaching, nursing and the private sector. The Kurdish society of the 1960s had significantly become accustomed to women working as teachers, secretaries or nurses, and to their growing independent presence in public. Women had also been a part of production, as noted before, and the expansion of the economy also expanded their economic involvement. However, the achieved degree of independence in new jobs, which required prior education, created a new dimension in the existing gender relations in favour of women. Indeed, this accentuated the resistance of men to women's empowerment, even in middle class families.³⁸

The share of women in this empowerment was not of course equal. Another important factor which restricted the positive impacts of legal and economic changes on the place of women, remained the gap in incomes and the economic well-being of families across different classes and regions. Economically, the majority of women joined the new, growing Kurdish working class. Babysitters, cleaners, market vendors and housekeepers increased many-fold. The internal migrant women resided in the new poor city districts on the outskirts of the cities. Most of them had lost their previous productive role in agricultural production without being provided with better economic opportunities. As noted in the previous chapters, many women ended up in brick-oven

³⁸ Qubadi, Interview.

factories, enduring harsh living and working conditions. There were no protective labour laws for anyone.

Therefore, the relationship between the economy and gender followed an undulating pattern, while economic well-being and educational background affected the degree of economic empowerment of women. Nevertheless, socio-economic changes introduced women to new possibilities in life which could not have been imagined a few decades earlier. For example, despite the hardship involved, working outside the home or residing in cities entangled women with others who endeavoured to enhance women's social status.³⁹ Actively pursued by Iranian women's organisations, new laws to improve working conditions for women followed the expansion of women workforce.⁴⁰ This involved a discursive battle on behalf of the Woman's Organisation to create a fertile ground for the public supporting laws protecting women workers. The Organisation proclaimed that 'Today, working is an honour for woman',⁴¹ and advised women that 'Evening times are the time for doing household tasks and helping the children with their homework'.⁴² Nevertheless, this conservatism was compensated by an ardent cultivation of the notion of 'the equality between men and women', and providing previously non-existent advice for working women and mothers.⁴³ These created the ground for a possible labour law, which promised the support of the state. The following message of the Organisation reflected the realities of the time, including cultural resistance to improving the place of women, the ambivalent position of the White Revolution – i.e. both its modernising impact and its conservatism – and the significance of women's agency:

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *Hoquq Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)*, 362-74.

⁴¹ Cf. Ibid., 314.

⁴² Cf. Ibid., 322.

⁴³ Cf. Ibid., 312, 15, 19 and 23-48.

The White Revolution placed our country at the crossroads of progress and development. The share of women [in the Revolution], especially that of working women, has been more than others. [This is] because, on the one hand, their right to vote was recognised and, on the other, in the same way as their brothers, they became shareholders in factories [...] [unlike before] the wages for men and women are equal [...] working is an honour for woman and a woman is worth more if she can work, because her wages will enhance the economic well-being of the family and bring prosperity.⁴⁴

Finally, the appearance of women in the domains of sports and the arts, as further significant aspects of socio-economic and cultural modernisations, should alert us to other significant, thus far neglected, aspects of modernisation. Physical education constituted an aspect of modern education in Iran, and grew with the latter's expansion. Like modern education, it gained a special place in the modern, nationalising state; however, new sports required pioneers who, influenced by progressive and national ideas of the time, actively advocated a *healthy* education at least since the 1930s.⁴⁵ Although by the mid-1970s the expansion of sports had considerably included school girls and created a firm foundation for women in sport, descriptive histories of *men* in sport in Kurdistan have totally ignored women.⁴⁶ According to official statistics, quantitatively, in 1973-74 in table tennis, basketball, fencing, volleyball and handball, there were respectively 474, 248, 57, 366 and 76 female participants in Kurdistan Province, compared to 1124, 336, 84, 1123 and 82 male participants.⁴⁷ Combined with oral accounts and photographic

⁴⁴ Ibid., 310-11.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Amuzesh wa Parvaresh*, Vol. 9, No.5 (Mordad 1318 [1939], 7.

⁴⁶ Cf. Bahram Mehrpaima, *Pishineye Warzesh Dar Saqqez-Kordestan* [The Genesis of Sport in Saqqez-Kurdistan] (Tehran: Tavakoli, 1390 [2011]).

⁴⁷ Plan and Budget Organisation, *Daftarcheye Amare Iran* [Statistical Notebook of Iran] (Iran: Statistics Centre, 1976), 133-36.

evidence, a rising proportion of women in sport can be seen, which signalled the profound transformation of conventional sports which had been dominated by men. The growing presence of women in sport could not have been possible without the firm foundation which was laid during the modernisation of education.

Music and cinema became other spheres in which the traditional conception of women was challenged, with the creation of new roles for women and the modernisation of the existing perceptions. The cinematic arts perpetuated the image of women, now literate and working, as sexual beings facing the constant threat of offensive attitudes, or as sexually vulnerable to prostitution because of poverty; for these reasons, the protection of men as their saviours was constantly required. At the same time, the increasing number of women in educational and healthcare jobs, or as singers, writers and poets with literary and artistic influence, helped create and transform the perceptions of the new generation of educated, urban men. The growing presence of women in such fields coincided with the proliferation of the audio and, especially, visual means of communication such as radio and television, which maximised their impact on society, forcing the reconfiguration of the boundaries of masculinity and femininity. Qualitatively, the women of the early twentieth century and women of the 1970s could not be compared in their social position and attitudes, which also applied to men.

In 1978,

The women's share in Iran's work force was approximately two million, including 190,000 with university education and expert training. 144,000 women worked as civil servants, including 1,666 women with various managerial posts. The number of [female] university lecturers exceeded 1,800 [while] there were women working in the army and police force or as lawyers, judges and engineers. The theology faculties [in the universities] were the

only institutions which did not have any place for women. In 1978, as a result of the endeavours of organised women's groups for encouraging the political and electoral participation of women, 333 women were elected the members of local councils. In the same year, there were 22 [female] members of the Majlis [Parliament] and another two members of the Senate.⁴⁸

Collective agency

Interrelated with other the factors discussed above, women's agency was an indispensable factor in the transformation of the place of women in Iran in general. To include this factor in an analysis of the cultural transformation of the period, is to emphasise the actions undertaken by a generation of educated women, who were intellectually shaped by progressive ideas of the time. These actions included the establishment of schools, women's organisations, help points, social work in difficult conditions in villages or among the poor, and political agitation towards forcing new elections and the legislation of family laws. These actions were not meagre. It was women's collective agency that primarily explains the distinction between Iran, which experienced a notable transformation of gender relations, with some other neighbouring countries, which went through much more limited, institutional changes. In Iran, because of the profound institutional changes a higher status of women was preserved although a woman-friendly state was replaced by an ideologically strict and misogynist one. Furthermore, incessant intellectual transformations in Iran since the Constitutional Revolution, and later the emergence of political parties in the 1940s (the Tuda) and 1960s, e.g. Fedayyan, which became a platform for women's activism, cannot be overemphasised.

⁴⁸ *Hoquqe Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)*, 18-19.

The connection with the outside world, the expansion of the new means of communication, and revolutions and movements, including the advance of feminism, were all reflected in a generation of Iranians' writers, poets, and social and cultural critics among which women stood out and provided role models. Confirmed by the oral accounts of women workers, teachers and local activists, this occurred in a situation of extreme hardship, within a hostile culture and under a politically oppressive state during the era of the White Revolution. The historical lesson derived from this is that collective agency is a crucial factor for bringing about the institutional transformations regarding women in Iran. Presenting a challenge to visible and invisible practices involving women, directly or indirectly, was possible because of 'new women', whose emergence owed itself to many interrelated factors, discussed above. New lifestyles made social norms or practices unfavourable to women look outdated and encouraged action; the existence of a generation of women, whose emancipation had begun and who were fighting for their further emancipation, was to radically transform the existing gender relations or social norms in Iran in the period in question. Indeed, as one can infer from recent reports of international organisations, governments legal actions are not effective without the existence of a social force, i.e. socially and politically active women, to transform social norms.⁴⁹

This said, while recognising women's activism in Kurdistan in the era of the White Revolution, one cannot imagine the elevated place of women in Kurdish-Iranian society outside the history of Iran in the twentieth century. As the society's socio-economic integration into modern Iran continued, the place of women became increasingly linked

⁴⁹ Cf. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), *Femal Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Statistical Overview* (New York: 2013), available at: http://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FGMC_Lo_res_Final_26.pdf.

with the way gender relations in Iran were being transformed. By the 1940s, feminism in Iran had entered public discourse as a consequence of Iranian women's activism, reforms and new laws in the preceding years.⁵⁰ Two world wars, which brought women of many countries into factories in a massive scale, the Russian Revolution, and other social movements, were as crucial in spreading the ideas of women's emancipation and gender equality. As a result, by the 1960s a widespread *nehzat-e zanan* or women's movement in Iran had gradually taken form, represented by various women's organisations.⁵¹ Without the pressure from this movement, the right of women to vote would not have materialised in 1963. Indeed, family laws, ratified by the Parliament in the following years, which radically altered the gender relations in Iran, were owed to the actions of the women's organisations. However, the movement still needed to become more powerful and self-aware if women were to achieve more rights and enhancement of their social status.⁵² This led to more liaisons with the state, the support of which the movement hoped to attract by appealing to Princess Ashraf, the reigning Shah's twin sister. As the result of several months of research by a group of women's leaders, the Women Organisation was formed with the Princess as its honorary president. The Organisation's first congress in 1966 consisted of 5,000 members who had come from different parts of Iran to ratify the Organisation's Constitution.⁵³

The Women Organisation was an amalgamation of many smaller organisations which had been launched by women's activists, and had been proliferating across Iran. As a result of its liaison with the state and, positively, with male ministers in power, the Organisation became more powerful. Its efforts affected, for example, school textbooks,

⁵⁰ Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Women*, 7-8.

⁵¹ Afkhami, *Zanan, Dowlat Va Jame'e Dar Iran: 1941-1978*, 39.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 39-40.

a more favourable labour law for working women, family law and penal codes.⁵⁴ Its branches spread across Iran—there were 10 branches in the Kurdistan Province—encouraging women’s more active participation in society.⁵⁵ According to the director of the Organisation, Mahnaz Afkhami, the Shah was supportive but remained conservative for fear of the reaction of the religious hierarchy.⁵⁶ The biggest hurdle was an ingrained patriarchal ideology, supported by culturally deep-rooted religious institutions. The Shah’s support emanated from his character, but more importantly from the need for a new place of women in the modernising Iran too, while his conservatism reflected the contemporary social and cultural struggles.

Although the women’s societies continued their existence independently, Iran’s Women Organisation gradually became more centralised as the result of its liaison with the state. Seeking to accumulate political influence through powerful individuals and ministers initially yielded the desired results. However, in the long run, according to Mahnaz Afkhami, the Organisation became too aligned with the state, especially when making a mistake of supporting the new one-party system which only recognised the Rastakhiz Party:⁵⁷ ‘This made many dissidents of the [Shah’s] regime suspicious of the Organisation’.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the women’s movement and the Organisation left an indelible mark on Iran with their major contributions to the enhancement of the social status of women in Iran. With distinct cultural characteristics, imagining the new women in Iran without the women’s movement is impossible.

⁵⁴ In textbooks working women were represented as *better mothers* in order to appease the patriarchal system. They did also advocate 8-hour work days and the establishment of nurseries within factories. *Hoquqe Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)*, 316.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁵⁶ Afkhami, *Zanan, Dowlat Va Jame'e Dar Iran: 1941-1978*, 101.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Resistance

A significant aspect of the existing gender relations was undoubtedly women's resistance to different forms of male dominance, manifest in the various ways in which they interacted with their environment. Examining the conditions of women from this perspective allows for a change of perception from women as a category in development theories or an *en masse* force, to women as human beings with names and faces. In this regard, it is very productive to use Ilan Pappé's notion of 'autonomous space' which women created to cope with a male-dominated society or to organise and manage their lives.⁵⁹ While Pappé concisely stresses the importance of legal and social 'reforms from above [...] initiated by the state, and by the well publicized feminism of "women worthies"',⁶⁰ the roles of educated women and organised feminism in Iran which made 'reform from above' and changes in the legal system possible, need to be underlined. Therefore (Pappé seems to miss this point) it was not simply the 'secularisation of the legal system' by the state, but pressure from below along with the ongoing tension between (organised) women, the state and the religious establishments, on the one hand, and between the state and the religious institutions, on the other, which determined the scope of change of the social status of women. According to Pappé, the secularisation of the Middle Eastern states after World War I created 'better opportunities for effecting a significant transformation in the position of women through legal reforms'. However, he maintains, 'it was left to state officials in high positions to formulate and execute new policies in women's favour if they were *inclined to do so*' (emphasis added).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Pappé, *Modern Middle East*, 224.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 232.

⁶¹ Ibid., 234.

In the case of Iran, women's activism, exemplified by publications and organisations, had preceded the modern state of Iran;⁶² 'same-tireless dedication was responsible for bringing about the passage of Family Protection Law in 1967 and its amendment in 1973'.⁶³ State officials' dispositions were decisively affected by the existence of such a pressure and, insofar as the state was concerned, it relied on political acts to have impact on women's social or legal status. The infamous *kashf-e hejab*, or unveiling, was a case in point. It aimed to create a superficial modern image of Iranian women while women organisations such as Women's League were being eliminated and disbanded.⁶⁴ As another illustration of this, the right of women to vote in Iran, which was incorporated into the principles of the White Revolution, only came after the symbolic participation of women in the previous election, which forced the state to change the election laws in favour of women in 1963. As Pappe rightly argues, the state's reforms related to women resulted from economic or political considerations.⁶⁵ Although the support of state, especially in the face of the mounting opposition of religious forces, was crucial, a study of women's activism since the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 shows that 'above all, it was the tireless effort of hundreds of committed women for more than fifty years that finally brought about the passage of this [election] law'.⁶⁶ This point is further illuminated by comparative studies of the status of women in Iran and other

⁶² For example, as Nashat shows, early publications included *Shukufeh* (Blossom), *Zaban-e Zanan* (The Women's Voice) and *'Alam-e Naswan* (The World of Women), 'undertaken by the women activists to enlighten women'. Two early societies formed in the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 were *Anjoman-e Azadi-ye Zanan* (the Women's Freedom Movement) and *Anjoman-e Mukhadarat-e Vatan* (National Ladies' Society). For this see Guity Nashat, "Women in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: A Historical Overview," in Guity Nashat (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Iran* (Colorado: West View Press, 1983), 22 and 24.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁵ This chapter's observations on Pappe's argument, which is in favour of writing women histories with a new methodology, complements his valuable study and his deconstructive approach to concepts popularised by modernisation and development theories.

⁶⁶ Nashat, "Women in Pre-Revolutionary Iran", 30.

regional countries. As a case in point, as Pappe noted, Jordan failed to keep pace with others in introducing reforms related to the status of women.⁶⁷ There may be many reasons for the different chronologies and paces of change related to women; however, the tradition of organised feminism and the impact of pressure from below are significant factors which explain the differences of processes related to women in different countries, from Tunisia to Iran to Afghanistan.⁶⁸ The histories of women are intertwined with women's efforts to reform their societies' gender order.

As their incorporation into modern Iran continued to accelerate, Kurdish-speaking women in Iran were increasingly affected by the gradual modernisation of gender relations. In different ways, changing historical and social contexts presented new opportunities for them to challenge social norms. In Kurdish society, microhistories can be uncovered through the seemingly trivial stories of excluded women, or of major histories relating to the educated, urban generation which redefined women's role in both private and public spheres. These stories include cases in which women, encountering a female teacher for the first time in the 1970s, express opinions on customs such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation and against domestic violence, and interesting tales of, for example, the cooperation of the wives of the same landowner to maintain a role in the management of the community, despite the fact that polygamous marriage created unfavourable conditions for the women involved. Represented by prominent women, women's societies, and educated and working women, the microhistories record social and political activism throughout the twentieth century.

⁶⁷ Pappe, *Modern Middle East*, 235.

⁶⁸ The absence of this factor becomes more conspicuous when Pappe seems to attribute the process of change mainly to the state changes related to the status of women in Iran under the Pahlavis, without making the pressure from below central to these changes. This leads to an incorrect conclusion about women not defending the Pahlavi state during the 1979 Revolution. For this *ibid.*, 237-38.

The presence of prominent women throughout Kurdish history undoubtedly exerted a great impact on their communities' perceptions of gender. The existence of such 'women worthies' was not, however, exclusive to the Kurds, and more importantly the acceptance of their powerful role, according to studies on women in the early modern times, probably stemmed from the fact that the hierarchies of social class or genealogy outweighed gender as a determinant of social role.⁶⁹ The upper class in pre-modern Kurdish principalities, e.g. Soran, Ardalan and Baban, contained 'women worthies' throughout successive centuries. They emerged as poets (Mastura Ardalan), or as activists (Habsa Khan Naqib, 1891-1953), who is believed to have founded the first women's society in 1930 in Sulaimaniya in modern Iraq, or as community leaders (the provincial governor of Halabja, 'Adila Khanim, 1848-1924). Many such individuals functioned as points of support for women of the lower strata too. The women of the landowner's household did not always belong to the upper class. According to published memoirs, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the three wives of the *agha* of Delawan village worked as a team, under the supervision of the older wife, to manage the myriad tasks of the landowner's household and also the community around it.⁷⁰ In this way, they created their own autonomous space, including a help point for other women to rely on.

In some Kurdish regions, *radu khistin* (Ku. elopement) challenged forced marriage in favour of mutual love. In a region like that of Sardasht in west of Iranian Kurdistan, a woman could succeed in choosing her partner for life by conducting marriage through elopement. The eloped couple took refuge in a powerful household, usually that of a landowner or a tribal chief, after which attempts were made to achieve the consent of the

⁶⁹ Wiesner-Hanks, "Gender", 107.

⁷⁰ Hesami, *Le Bireweriekanim*, 22. The author (1926-2001) was a Kurdish political activist and a teacher. His memoirs contain valuable observation on such women's life, however, without providing any analysis.

woman's family to the marriage. As an insult, a woman could be mocked by other women 'for not being fit for elopement'. However, not all cases of elopements ended peacefully. In some regions such as Mangorayeti, located between Sardasht and Mahabad, elopement continued to be practiced until the 1980s.

As noted in Part I, women formed the most vulnerable section of society throughout the vicissitudes of the twentieth century. Rafiq Helmi reported how women, who had to leave their homes in Iranian Kurdistan during World War One and enter Ottoman Kurdistan, were forced to engage in prostitution to survive, while Hemin recalled the trading of young girls for a sack of flour during the next war. Consistently missed by national historiography, Kurdish movements relied heavily on women; whilst the men were fighting, women endured hunger and the consequences of forced banishment. They were always the first to suffer from the governments' brutal oppressive machine. A typical example was Azad's, a Kurdish boy living under the Ba'th regime, mother, who followed her husband who was a Peshmarga of Mulla Mustafa Barzani during the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout those years, she had to take care of many children, giving her consent to her husband's ideas and orders 'by only saying OK'.⁷¹

Political movements, often rather indirectly, engaged women in politics. Later political upheavals and uprisings during or in the post-World War Two era, such as the Kurdish Republic, the crisis of the nationalisation of oil in Iran, and the peasant uprisings across Bukan region in Iranian Kurdistan, increased women's direct participations in politics. Village councils included female representatives in many cases.⁷² Patriarchal gender relations ensured women's participations were within the boundaries of the existing patriarchal system. However, inevitably the historical events affected social,

⁷¹ Hiner Saleem, *My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan* (New York: Picador, 2006), 12.

⁷² Amini, Interview.

political and gender awareness of all. An illustration of this is the story of Mina from Qoital village around Sardasht, whom a teacher met in the end of the 1970s. Among the local people, Mina was known for being brave and free-minded. Her husband, Husein, had regularly defied the landowners, and later began to help the group around Sharifzada and Mu'eini (see the previous chapter) during the 1960s. After marrying Husein, Mina became engaged in political activities. She would hide and escort other activists to pass checkpoints safely, deliver correspondence and undertake logistic tasks. At the end of the 1970s, 'Mina had three children whose characters resembled hers in many ways'.⁷³ Finally, the new educated, urban generation could count on an unwavering support from their mothers, who encouraged their daughters to change the way women lived.

CONCLUSION

'Modernity' in Iran, including Iranian Kurdistan, entailed new institutions of education and civil and political bodies (women's societies, political parties, and the 'secular' state) which challenged the traditionally inferior social status of women in both family and public. For statesmen and intellectuals alike, transforming Iran into a modern nation postulated the 'new woman', vital for a progressive image. Consequently, the state-led modernisation restructured the existing gender relations, which came to be characterised by the growing presence of women in various social, cultural and economic fields. This process involved significant scientific, educational, social and legal achievements for women, for which, taking into account the pressure which women put on the state, women's activism was indispensable. The histories of women in Iran in general, and in Kurdistan in particular, demonstrate this activism which defied the existing gender order.

⁷³ Qubadi, *Shaqayeqha*, 95.

Although the development discourse, which guided the Pahlavi state's modernisation, discovered women as a category, reformism in Iran had preceded the new discourse by many decades. Later efforts both from above and from below to improve the place of women in society were a synthesis of that reformism and development discourse. The Pahlavis' constructive approach to the question of women was crucial for realising the above achievements. It comes as no surprise that the women of Iran of the 1970s, particularly urban women, generally considered themselves better-off in comparison with the women of the past. Furthermore, the new image of woman continued stubbornly to distinguish Iran in the region, despite the change in the nature of that state at the end of the 1970s, indicating women's agency as a significant factor to obtain such achievements.

Statistics show the inclusion of many women in ministerial and governmental post or with responsibilities in executive and judicial power centres.⁷⁴ In Kurdistan this was reflected in a higher number of educated women who became teachers, nurses, lawyers, secretaries, doctors, etc., accompanied by a new perspective on the role of women in society, effectively formed during the second half of the twentieth century. As argued in this chapter, this needs to be linked to social change across Iran as another significant aspect of the socio-economic incorporation of Kurdish society into modern Iran.

The 1979 Revolution, which was heavily filmed and shown on television, presented women as a social force and revealed an *institutionalised* women's activism. This activism continued to characterise Kurdistan in the following years, despite the disappearance of the women-friendly Pahlavi state and its replacement with a state committed to sex segregation. A case in point presents itself in the fact that the White Revolution socially changed and modernised the place of women in Kurdish society, yet

⁷⁴ *Hoquq-e Zan Dar Iran (1357-1346)*, 19.

the disparity between the urban and rural areas regarding the place of women stubbornly remained and continued to characterise the Kurdish region still in the 1980s. Women's activism continued to promote the expectations of rural women who waited to take their chances when the state-led modernisation finally and more properly reached them in the next two decades following the 1979 Revolution, of course prioritising its own needs like the Pahlavi state had done before.

29. The women of landowner households around Saqqez, Qajar Kurdistan, 1910.



Source: courtesy of Kurdistan Photolibrary of Hossein Yazdanpana.

30. Nahid Primary School pupils in school uniform, Saqqez, 1973.



Source: courtesy of Shahnaz Shahlaiy.

31. Students in Kurdish dress, Parvareh Secondary School for girls, Saqqez, 1979.



Source: courtesy of Shahnaz Shahlaiy.

32. Hapsa Khan Naqib among new Kurdish-speaking women, modern Iraq, circa 1950s.



Source: <http://www.khaktv.net/all-detail.aspx?jicare=2438&type=farhang>.

33. Kashf-e hejab (forced unveiling).



The elites with their wives and daughters in a school in Saqqez, Kurdistan, the end of the 1930s. This photograph shows attempts to demonstrate an artificial image of women. The new dress code seems too foreign and is not fully observed by the women.
Source: Faruqi, *Saqqez*, 225-6.

CONCLUSION: Kurdish Society a Synthesis of the Dual Process of Modernisation

The central idea of this study posits that the modernisation of Iran and the formation of Iran's modern nation-state involved a dual process of socio-economic transformation and homogenisation of identity and culture based on Persian as the perceived nation's core ethnocultural community. This process, by the end of the 1970s, had resulted in profound social, economic, political and cultural transformations of Kurdish society in Iran. It also created new conditions for resistance to homogenisation and struggle for political and cultural rights of the Kurds to continue, according to various historical contexts.

Each chapter in this study sets out to demonstrate in different, but interwoven, ways how this dual process takes place, and what impact it has on the formation of modern Iranian Kurdish society. They shed light on two crucial aspects of that process. First, socio-economic modernisation results in the (unequal) integration of Kurdish society in modern Iran. For example, urbanisation, the expansion of economy, the successive centralising, urban-oriented development programmes, the new modernising institutions of education and healthcare, and cultural modernisation, all strengthened or created new bonds between Kurdish society and other societies in modern Iran in a single political and economic entity. Therefore, while it endeavoured to promote its political and social positions in the new nation-state and preserve its commonality with other Kurdish societies located in adjacent nation-states, Iranian Kurdish society followed the integrating tendency of social change and modernisation. The concept of *Kurdish-Iranian* corresponds to this reality, which is the result of almost a century-old transformation and modernisation of Iran; it is no coincidence that political and cultural demands of the Kurds

in different historical conjunctures, including the Kurdish 'Republic', have been defined within the framework of Iran.

Secondly, the dual process involves the Kurds' resistance to a homogenising modernisation while their struggle for cultural and political rights continues. This reflects a Kurdish society the political and cultural structures of which were (re)shaped according to the policies of the state in the context of modern cultural encounters. The concept of *Kurdayeti* is believed to represent, more than a vague 'Kurdish nationalism', this aspect of the dual process; it continued to be reconfigured according to historical contexts, for example the quasi-autonomous period of the early 1940s and the revolutionary activities of the 1960s and the 1970s, and to be affected by intellectual transformations, a case in point being the inspirational Thirdworldist ideologies of the 1960s. Meanwhile, discourses of power, based on the concept of the Kurds as *aqaliye qaumi* along with misrepresentation, justified the Kurds' marginalised position in the modern nation-state of Iran, political suppression and militarisation; however, this was unceasingly defied by political, social, and cultural activism of a new, urban, educated generation of men and women throughout the twentieth century. From this perspective, this study concludes that to understand the consequences of modernity and modernisation for the Kurds in Iran, we need to look at the dialectics of the dual process, because Kurdish society of the second half of the century is effectively a synthesis of that multifaceted process.

As discussed in Chapter 3 and in the other chapters that follow, during this process the era of the White Revolution distinguishes itself for the intensification of modernisation and unprecedented social transformations it entailed. It is important to avoid mythologising or trivialising the era, and acknowledge its significance for twentieth-century Iran, by a critical reading of the state-led modernisation in that period.

In fact, rather than being an invention of the ruling Shah, the White Revolution, as a reform programme in a specific historical context, was a synthesis of the existing ideas to reform Iran, and the development discourses or theories which emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. This becomes more evident if we underline two facts. First, explained by political scientists, the aim of the modernising programmes of post-World War Two era, including the White Revolution, was to thwart revolution by neutralising the threat posed by discontented social classes or groups. As the historians of Iran have also noted, the inception of the White Revolution to implement the existing reformist ideas of the time in Iran, was an attempt to preserve the monarchy during a tumultuous period of regional revolutions and coups. The second fact pertains to the emergence of what it holds to be *generations for change*, who, ultimately failed by a personified dictatorship, left an enduring legacy through, for example, social, cultural and literary activism. Simultaneously, as discussed in Chapter 5, the proliferation of the audio and visual means of communication, made the era a unique and challenging episode in the formation of modern Iran.

The consequences of the state-led modernisation during the White Revolution for Iranian Kurdish society were significant; however, they simultaneously revealed the project's centralising orientation. Analysed in Chapters 3 and 4, since the mid-twentieth century, development programmes became increasingly centralised and continued to be characterised by the absence of any provincial (or more precisely regional) planning. Until then, the lack of revenue was one of the main problems which had paralysed the effective execution of economic plans in Iran. As a mainly rural and agricultural society, the Kurdish region under Reza Shah, but also in later periods, suffered from both the orientation and deficiencies of the economic policies. In this respect, the Plan

Organisation of the 1950s under Ebtehaj symbolised centralisation and set a precedent for the economic plans that followed during the White Revolution. Indeed, the Second Development Plan (1956-1962) effectively marked the triumph of centralisation in its tension with decentralisation, or more regional-oriented, plans.

This remained the case even when more comprehensive and sophisticated plans emerged, owing to the spiralling oil revenues of the early 1970s. Consequently, the development plans retained their focus on the expansion of modernisation from the centre, with the effect that their emphasis on industrialisation or privatisation excluded regions which lacked capital and the potential of which was ignored. The notion of 'provincial development' died with the White Revolution. Moreover, insofar as the Kurdish region was concerned, political considerations also affected the state's economic policies, while economic changes reflected the economic expansion of the state, symbolised, for example, not by 'industrialisation', but by a thriving, labour incentive, construction industry. Therefore, the general improvement of socio-economic conditions in Kurdistan depended on the effectiveness of the development plans to address, for instance, infrastructure, urbanisation, transportations, communications, healthcare and education. Nevertheless, and in this respect, the urban-oriented development plans of the 1960s and 1970s were socio-economically more effective than their predecessors.

Furthermore, the scope of change was significantly extended during the era of the White Revolution to include, for example, modern education and healthcare (with major results), while land reform as its centrepiece effectively replaced the political and social authority of the Kurdish landowner class with that of the state. Although debilitated, the Kurdish *agha* class did not disappear but maintained their economic and social power in different ways, or remained dormant to re-emerge opportunistically to claim the

restitution of their lost lands; a unique opportunity presented itself when the central power lost its coercive forces and subsequently its grip on society in 1979. Moreover, the land reform led to unprecedented migration and social movements of Kurdish peasantry, with their own social consequences. For example, as a unit of the workforce, migrating peasant families endured harsh working conditions in brick-oven factories, while an army of seasonal workers was also created. This attests to the shortcomings of the reform as an uneven and prolonged process with serious social consequences. However, as confirmed by contemporaries, the reform inaugurated massive social movements also with further dynamic ramifications: it linked the village to constantly changing economic and social spheres, and marked the effective start of the end of its social isolation. As noted, this had not yet been realised by the end of the 1970s, though significant changes in many respects could be detected. Finally, the long-term demise of both the foundations of tribalism, and the social and political cohesiveness of the Kurdish *agha* class, a reality of twenty-first century Iranian Kurdistan, could not have happened without the White Revolution's land reform; this is a distinguishing characteristic of Iranian Kurdish society compared with other Kurdish societies of the region.

Moreover, modernisation entailed a profound transformation of social formations. Most notably, the expansion of a market economy, along with a conventional mercantile economy, modern education and healthcare, and civil administration, yielded a Kurdish middle class, whereas the land reform, unplanned urbanisation which produced impoverished city neighbourhoods, and the growth of the economy, contributed immensely to the formation of modern Kurdish working class, a significant proportion of which, in addition to farm workers, consisted of modern seasonal workers and unskilled urban labourers.

Regionally, insofar as the disparity between urban and rural areas in Kurdistan was concerned, it was sustained, and in many cases the gap even widened, during the era of the White Revolution; no economic plan concerned with urbanisation, industrialisation, modern healthcare and education addressed that issue effectively. Culturally, this disparity applies to the unequal distribution of cultural capital too. While the urban centres continued to benefit from cultural innovations in an increasingly mediasised society, a significant part of the rural areas remained isolated from a rapidly changing world.

Furthermore, two other major areas of change pertained to political and cultural spheres. Above all, the (re)formation of both political and cultural structures of Kurdish society corresponded to the process of homogenisation. A crucial element in this respect was political and cultural resistance to the homogenising policies of an authoritarian modern state, which continued to be a prominent characteristic of Iranian Kurdistan. Between 1946 and 1979, except for short intervals, dictatorship and militarisation characterised the political situation of Kurdistan, and continued to undermine civil and democratic means of political participation. By the 1970s, the absolute power of the monarch had been established. These factors kept the idea of armed struggle both relevant and attractive, especially in an era during which the Thirdworldist ideologies became inescapably influential. Insofar as Iranian Kurdish political activists were concerned, this was specifically the case with the movement of the 1960s, the end of which marked a critique of guerrilla warfare in favour of social revolution theories. Moreover, administratively, in the same period the motives behind modern administrative divisions differed from pre-modern, largely geographical and administrative considerations, and began to serve a national, homogenising modern state. This resulted in further redivisions of the region and led to the marginalisation of communities such as the Failis in the south,

and less privileged cities and regions in the northwest of Iran's Kurdish region, such as Somabradost. Finally, modern education, social change, urbanisation as well as the intellectual transformations of post-World War Two era yielded modern Kurdish political parties, which, in the long run, proceeded to completely replace tribal politics in Iranian Kurdistan.

As explicated in Chapter 5, insofar as culture as a symbolic system is concerned, this study illuminates the most significant aspect of the era's cultural transformation, that is, modern cultural encounters within a multicultural nation-state, in contrast to a colonial or imperial context, which resulted in the establishment of Persian cultural hegemony. The state and its modern education had effectively paved the way in that direction; however, the proliferation of audio, but crucially also visual means of communication such as television and cinema, were crucial to this end.

Although resistance to a hegemonic culture persisted, the cultural structure of Kurdish society continued to (re)form according to the way cultural encounters between intimate, and not alien, cultures were taking place. It was in this context that the hegemonic notion of 'mainstream' or 'official', and 'local', to describe Persian language and culture and that of other non-Persian speaking peoples in Iran respectively, became deeply ingrained in society in the era of the White Revolution. Admittedly, since the early years of the formation of the modern Iranian state, the literary prestige of Persian had begun to enjoy a state-sponsored political authority. However, the cultural superiority of Persian became hegemonic when the cultural inferiority of others was further institutionalised as a consequence of the visualisation of the means of communication, which proliferated alongside the expansion of modern education in Iran, transcending any literacy skills required for using the written modes of communication. Finally, the

modernisation's unequal distribution of cultural capital hindered the cultural potential of Kurdish society, especially in its rural regions. Therefore, championed by cultural and political activism, Kurdish society came to be characterised by Kurdish cultural resistance to the advance of a hegemonic culture. Such a tension between a homogenising culture and a resisting culture, meant that Kurdish cultural production continued to be either hindered or promoted according to variable social conditions.

In order to present this original and critical reading of the dual process, this study relies on a methodological and theoretical framework which makes a firm connection between nation-building and modernisation theories. Insofar as the concepts of 'Kurd' and 'Kurdistan' are concerned, this study's heterogenous approach renders insufficient a well-established homogenous approach, which has been historically advocated by an intellectual tradition since the end of the nineteenth century, and sustained vigorously throughout the next century. This framework benefits also from the advance of social change studies, and critiques of modernisation and development theories, and is informed by cultural and gender studies which have been discussed throughout this study. Combined, they form a conceptual framework to assess themes related to Kurdish society in Iran. In this respect, a unique contribution of this study is a methodological break with the intellectual tradition in order to be able to approach the Kurds not as a monolithic entity, but as members of *various* Kurdish societies, each affected by almost a century-old social change and transformation in *various* nation-states. This approach does not undermine the Kurds' cultural commonalities, which exist regardless of their geographic locations, nor attempts to erode their distinct histories. It simply asks for their assessments in their own terms, based on both their own and common histories with others around them. It is only this heterogenous, theoretically informed approach which can help the

scholarship to leap forward in its analysing the social and historical formations of modern Kurdish societies.

Furthermore, a study of the formation of modern Kurdish society needs to underline the role of non-state agents of change and their interaction with the state as the central player. This study's examination of the expansion of modern education and healthcare reveals the significance of including non-state agents of change. Although urban oriented, these institutions were two leading areas of change in Kurdistan, also because their expansions involved the endeavours of non-state agents of change, who made the promotion of the social and cultural awareness of people a major part of their mission; the role of non-state agents of change is often overlooked by theories of modernisation. The interaction of the state and non-state agents of change is also revealed in the process involving the modernisation of gender relations. Women's agency was crucial in the emergence of both an urban, educated generation of women by the end of the 1970s, and for the institutionalisation of a promoted social status of women in Iranian societies.

Lastly, this study's unique contribution to both Kurdish and Iranian studies is complemented by its academically productive nature. Its investigation of the dual process reveals the need for further examinations of various themes. For example, it identifies a paradox based on Kurdish society's simultaneous social integration and cultural resistance. On the one hand, this refers to the strong connections between Iranian societies and, on the other hand, underlines the Kurds' ongoing struggle to improve their cultural and political positions within modern Iran. However, this raises two new sets of questions around (1) Kurdish identity, and (2) social change studies, which propose new avenues of research. As regards the former, how do the dialectics of this process continue to (re)shape Iranian Kurdish society in the periods that follow the era of the White

Revolution? How do cultural encounters manifest themselves? To identify any advances of Kurdish cultural practices in Iran, what course, to borrow from Williams, has the tension between emergent and hegemonic cultures taken since the 1970s? How prominent has Kurdish culture and literature become in recent decades? These and many more questions reveal that the dual process incorporates infinite sources which affect the formations of Kurdish identity and modern Kurdish society. This is a dynamic process which must be acknowledged.

The other set of questions bears on a decisive turn to social change studies, whose themes need to be examined in the light of constant methodological and theoretical endeavours in relevant fields. This means engaging, among scholarly fields, with studies of economy and society; gender order and reproduction of masculinity and femininity; the class structure; education and healthcare; the disparity between city and village; and historiography, political science, literature, and cultural studies. This is also necessary in order to defy national narratives which continue to claim these fields in detriment to social history and to social change studies.

The result of the expansion of the scholarship will be demarginalisation of Iranian Kurdish studies in the face of homogenous, national narratives, on the one hand, and making such studies central to Iranian studies, on the other. The achievement of this is presupposed by an approach which, founded on common social, economic, cultural, political and historical concerns between Kurdish society and other societies in Iran, regards Kurdish and Iranian studies as complementary. Such concerns are as significant as any society's peculiarity in all those aspects, because they reflect a common process of change and transformation in the last century. To promote that attitude in academia is a major task, but worth fighting for; and based on the common enterprises of the past, one

can (always) be, to borrow from Gramsci, optimistic in will (while pessimistic in intellect). However, this optimism does not make the fulfilment of the task less urgent. The author of this study passionately believes it makes a difference in that direction.

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